"A TRACEDY IN HIGH LIFE," By HELENA BALLARD WHITE, NEXT WEEK!

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THE ROMERO DAGGER;

or, THE CANYON DIABLO MYSTERY.

By Hattie Horner Louthan.

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CHAPTER I.

When Detective Edward Jerrold reported at headquarters just an hour before his departure for the West, his chief, for the severalth time, went carefully over the somewhat meager details of the Canon Diablo mystery, which the young man had undertaken to solve.

Canon Diablo, or Devil's Canon, is a huge fissure, a volcanic gash in the surface of eastern Arizona, some five hundred and fifty feet wide, more than two hundred feet deep and many miles in length. Over this immense chasm, the Atlantic & Pacific Railway, now a part of the great Santa Fe system, had, but a short time previous to the mysterious disappearance of Lieutenant Beverley, flung its spider-legged bridge; and it was during a meeting of the advance construction train and the returning surveyors that the affair in question had occurred.

With the surveying party was a small detachment of cavalry from the military fort at Santa Fe, New Mexico, under Lieutenant Frank Beverley, a fragment of one of the companies sent out upon the report of a suspicious restlessness among some of the Indians of the Southwest.

The little party of soldiers and surveyors had halted for the afternoon and made their camp near the western rim, though they had been some two weeks in the vicinity of the canon and the neighboring pueblos.

Late on this particular afternoon, Lieutenant Beverley and two comrades had walked from camp across the bridge and half a mile beyond to the little village of shanties, tents and box cars, returning on the construction train. They alighted when the train paused on the eastern side, just before passing over the long bridge, and the Lieutenant, apparently following a sudden whim, announced that he would cross the canon on foot, and that he would join them at the camp supper. As it was a warm afternoon, neither of his companions volunteered to accompany him, and they returned to the caboose of the already moving train, flinging a parting quip at the Lieutenant upon his anxiety for uncalled-for exertion. Their leader had thrown back some laughing reply, waved his hand to his friends as he began the sharp descent of the chasm and—that was the last they ever saw of him.

His non-appearance at supper had created only the comment that, being something of a geologist, he might have lingered for specimens, or that he might have made a longer detour in his search to avoid the extreme steepness of the western slope just at the bridge. But when night passed and morning came, and still no Lieutenant, it was certain that some mishap had befallen him and search was at once made, a search that extended through the several days of their stay.

The party left the place with great reluctance, yet acknowledging the futility of further search. Nothing short of death could so long detain their leader. To one so young and strong, what was a scramble of five or six hundred feet? And once up and out of the canon, how could he lose his way to camp on the level expanse of eastern Arizona? Had he met death? At whose hands? The Indians of the vicinity were peaceful enough; the native herdsmen were harmless; and, besides, what motive? He had carried nothing of value, and a thorough search through pueblos and camps and wagons of the neighborhood revealed not the slightest trace of his belongings.

Again, if he had met death at the bottom of the gloomy chasm where trickled the little stream, too clear and too shallow at that time of year to conceal or to carry off the remains, where was the body? Not the slightest clue could be found, though the canon was explored carefully for half a mile above and half a mile below the railroad bridge. Small wonder that it had been termed a "mystery" and turned over to the detective force!

Edward Jerrold sat in the last Pullman of the west-bound Santa Fe flyer, revolving for the hundredth time the meager details on which he had to work. Lieutenant Beverley had been a classmate and friend of his, and this fact added personal zest to professional zeal in ferreting out this mysterious disappearance to the bottom.

His chief had told him that in the fort at Santa Fe could be found one or the privates who had been with Beverley at Diablo; so to Santa Fe was Jerrold bound to interview this soldier, to get possession of the late Lieutenant's belongings, papers and whatnot, and try to discover an enemy and a motive.

It was through this private that the detective agency had been informed that there had been a pleasure party encamped near the combined tent-home of surveyors and soldiers, a small party of ladies and gentlemen returning to Santa Fe by leisurely stages from what had been an extended outing.

Chief among this party had been a Spanish gentleman, Senor Romero, his two granddaughters, his grand-nephew and the chaperone of the ladies. With this family Lieutenant Beverley had been on terms of comparative intimacy, having become acquainted with them in Santa Fe. After assisting with the search this party had broken camp, and, making a wide detour to the north, continued their journey toward Santa Fe, the home of the Romeros.

Yes, Jerrold told himself, he must meet this Private Gilman, and through him these Romeros. No stone should be left unturned and no one spared in solving this puzzle.

Thus grimly concluded the detective; and, soothed by his Havana and the motion of the train, he put a drowsy period to his conclusions.

CHAPTER II.

On the eastern outskirt of sleepy, sunny old Santa Fe, out of hearing of even the drowsy droning of the so-called business life of the town, stood a large, comfortable residence built after the Spanish fashion around a roomy central court wherein a fountain played and flowers bloomed.

In the wide piazza surrounding this placita, or inner court, in the cool of a summer evening, sat several members of the Romero family; the old Senor dozing in a great chair, the younger of the two granddaughters, Carma, seated on a low stool beside a hammock, wherein lay a tall young man, judging from the length of the finely-formed limbs stretched along the swinging couch; and not far away was the ever-present chaperone, Senora Dolores, with her ever-present and never-finished drawnwork.

Senor Romero, the grandfather, had a swarthy face with fine classical features, to which the crown of white hair gave a certain lofty nobleness; and there was something in the clenched hands and erect figure even in sleep that bespoke an unusual vigor.

The young man in the hammock bore a strong resemblance to his elder, though the relationship was but slight. The resemblance could be traced in the latent strength of limb, the clear-cut, high-bred features and the thick black hair of Manuel Romero. Although his long dark lashes had drooped, the strong hand trailing over the side of the swaying hammock and the whole attitude evidenced indolence, yet there was the same nervous alertness that characterized the attitude of the elder, and you felt instinctively that neither was a man to be trifled with.

Carma Romero, despite the Spanish name, had not a Spanish feature. Senor Romero, himself boasting pure Castilian blood, had married one of his own countrywomen, a kinswoman, in fact, but their son, Carma's father, had chosen an American girl to rule his home. And Carma was her mother's own daughter, blue-eyed, fair-haired and slender to frailness. This tendency to delicate health, together with the early loss of the mother whom she so much resembled, made Carma the favorite of the doting grandfather, as she was of her sister Mercedes, some five years her junior.

Her clinging, dependent disposition had made her grandfather exceedingly anxious as to her disposal matrimonially, and while the three were yet children he had, with his Old World notions still biasing him, selected Carma as the wife of Manuel, the only male representative of his branch of the family—had made the selection despite the very apparent preference of that young man for the elder sister.

Carma reclined this afternoon beside the hammock of her betrothed, an unread book in her lap, an unstrung guitar near her. Occasionally she would catch his hand as he swayed toward her, and murmur to him in a sweet, coaxing voice:

"No, Manuelito," she was saying in a tone too low for the chaperone, "you have been absent-minded and neglectful of me, and—yes, almost indifferent, ever since we returned from the trip—you and Mercedes both, and poor Carma! There is no one to read aloud as we used to do; your guitar here has been unstrung since we came home; we have gone out for flowers not once, and we have been back, ah! ever so long—ages! Always before——"

She broke her plaintive murmur by laying his hand across her lips, as the hammock ceased its swaying motion beside her.

The young man opened his eyes and smiled indulgently, the smile lighting his whole face and deepening and brightening his fine dark eyes.

"Tonta!" he exclaimed in a low, rich voice whose strong vibration bespoke a powerful magnetism; "such an infant! Does she not know that the burning sun-god is still reigning and that exertion is a direct violation of the tyrant's decree? Did she not have her fill of flowers and the guitar on the long trip southwest?"

"Mercedes did," replied the girl, dropping his hand with the words, "Mercedes, who had all the flowers and the love songs and the flattery of you both. Tell me, why is it that one who cares so little for love should always have a surfeit of it? It makes Carma miserable, Carma, who——"

She was leaning close to the hammock, her hand grasping the side. Senora Dolores coughed, and Carma sat erect, murmuring under her breath:

"Tonight at ten, under the catalpas—I have something I would tell you."

Manuel smiled again, the same loving smile, saying softly:

"Tonight at ten my infant must be sleeping and dreaming of the flowers I shall surely bring her as a peace offering. Nay, better, we will all go to the hills for them—Mercedes, Carma and the unworthy Manuel; and he will defy the burning sun-god and exert his indolent self, and climb for the rare and beautiful blossoms for little Carma, for her alone! Flowers are for Carma, flowers, but never misery. Ah, here is Mercedes!"

The tall, graceful figure of a young woman was advancing toward them across the placita, grace in every movement, grace in the fold and sweep of every billow of her drapery. She was taller than Carma, with the full, dark, mature beauty over which amorous poets rave. It required but a glance into her face to assure you of the intensity of her nature, at once strong and tender. It was a singular fact that while the younger daughter was the counterpart of their mother in appearance and the very embodiment of their father's ardent, impetuous temperament, Mercedes, inheriting the glowing Spanish beauty of their father, was the exact reproduction of the mother in disposition, womanly, intense and finely susceptible to the influences of the Church.

Dolores had related to the girls again and again the always interesting story of how the passionate determination of their father, Almerio Romero, had snatched his lady-love from the very threshold of a convent where her mother's dying wish had dedicated her. Their grandfather had verified the story with many details, adding that he had aided his son in the accomplishment of his desire. But in detailing the elopement to the girls, the grandfather invariably closed with the statement that Almerio would have succeeded without his aid, as the Romero men generally carried out whatever they undertook, and were seldom, indeed, thwarted in their desires.

Dolores, who had been companion and maid to Almerio's wife, confided to the old Senor her belief that the would-be nun had suffered from qualms of conscience, especially during the earlier period of her wifehood and motherhood; and, further, that she believed that Mercedes had been "marked" by this maternal struggle, and that Mercedes would ultimately wear the nun's veil. At this the grandfather crossed himself, saying, "His will!" but shook his head when he thought of the girl's irresistible beauty of face and figure.

Only once had she hinted to Manuel of the nunnery for Mercedes, and then such a look came into his eyes as she seldom met there—the "Romero look," she termed it; and remembering that the Romero men were seldom thwarted in their desires, she was too frightened to mention the matter to the old Senor, whose heart, she knew, was set upon the marriage of Manuel with Carma.

As Mercedes approached the two in the court the young man came to a sitting position and drew toward him a canvas chair, arranging the cushions for her. His welcoming smile was different from that which he had given her sister. Again the dark face was illumined and glorified, but in the eyes this time shone the intense glow of a passion but half smothered, the wistful, anxious glance of a lover whose fate is uncertain, whose encouragement has been meager.

Carma was first to speak, and the old complaining note was in her tone:

"Where has Mercedes been so long? Oh, as grandfather would put it, where has the light of our day so long hidden herself?"

Mercedes drew her sister's head into her lap and stroked her bright hair lovingly.

"Over to San Miguel's with Father Cadena and Sister Celeste. Next Saturday I go to confession. Have you been since our return?"

The question might have been intended for both, but her eyes turned full upon Manuel, while his own, usually so eager to meet her keenest glance, dropped, and Carma replied for both, from the folds of her sister's billowy lace:

"Not we, when we have such faithful intercessors as Sister Celeste and—Sister Mercedes!"

The coupling of the two names, and the peculiar emphasis given the last, made Manuel's glance, inquiring and troubled, seek Mercedes' face; but she was smiling now and shaking her head reproachfully as over the misdoings of two refractory children.

Carma broke the ensuing silence, which was growing uncomfortable.

"I had an adventure this morning. Dolores and I were out toward Tesuque in the cart with Tonio. I wanted some flowers, Dolores did not wish to alight; but sighting a caballero with his attendant in the neighboring field, she concluded to accompany me. Flowers very pretty, very scarce; caballero very agreeable, very helpful. Caballero in a gray suit with traveling case, out sight-seeing. Back to the road, no cart, no Tonio. Dolores very angry, but very polite. Caballero speaks in Ingles which Dolores noes not comprehend; Carma thanks him in Spanish which the caballero does not comprehend. Caballero very much amused; Dolores very silent; Carma very frightened, very quiet."

Her hearers laughed.

"Very, very," mimicked Mercedes. "What heavy secrets for our infant's conscience! No wonder she shuns the confessional!"

"Ah, but he asked to call, and Dolores was so grateful about the carriage and so confused over his English, that he just took her thanks, plus her stammering, as consent, and—he will come!"

Manuel frowned, then laughed.

"Poor Dolores! She needs an assistant-dragon. Uncle may appoint me to the position—quien sabe?"

"Never!" cried Carma, gaily, "for then it would be good-by to adventures; then, indeed, might we both as well seek the convent, for both grandfather and Dolores have told us how jealously the Romero men guard the Romero women from all other men—save themselves!"

The young man laughed, this time good-naturedly.

"The rightful owners of coveted jewels must needs be efficient guardians. I have heard it said of our family that a Romero woman never married outside her own kinsmen but she broke the heart of a Romero man. Did not poor cousin Murillo thrust his dagger into his breast the night Reina Romero's betrothal to another was announced? And did not Uncle Luis commit social suicide when Valencia Romero wedded his American rival? But here, my kinswomen, this guitar is tuned at last, and as my reward for the exertion you are to sing the new song with the minors."

He swept the strings with a firm, soft touch, and looking up into Mercedes' face, listened, as he had a fashion of doing, with his eyes, while the sisters sang:

"Come, rest in this bosom, my own stricken deer,
Though the herd has flown from thee, thy home is still here.
Here still is the smile that no cloud can o'ercast,
And the heart and the hand all thine own to the last.

"Oh, what was love made for if 'tis not the same
Through joy and through turmoil, through glory and shame?
I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in thy heart,
I but know that I love thee, wherever thou art!

"Thou hast called me thine angel in moments of bliss,
Still thine angel I'll be 'mid the horrors of this.
Through the furnace unshrinking thy steps I'll pursue,
To shield thee and save thee, or perish there, too!"

"Carma is singing with her lips, likewise with her heart; Mercedes is singing with her lips alone. Could she ever bring her heart to say:

"'I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in thy heart,
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art'?"

His mouth was smiling, but his whole soul trembled in his voice and eyes as he swayed forward asking the question.

"Not she, our stern Senora Brutus!" said Carma, dropping her head again into the lace of her sister's lap and pressing Mercedes' hand over her eyelids. "Whenever I was naughty as a little girl, and before I went to Padre, to whom did I fly for forgiveness and absolution? Not to strict grandfather, nor to straight-laced Mercedes, nor to prim Dolores; but always and always to Manuel, who kept on hand a full stock of 'I-absolve-thees,' obtainable on demand."

"To me, because of a fellow-feeling," laughed the young man. "Was not I myself naughty (to put it mildly) half the time, vexing the good Padre's ears with the unceasing 'I confess' and 'I accuse myself'? But our sweet Mercedes—what did she ever have to confess? Two minutes late to mass, one glance too many into her mirror to please her tender conscience, an instant's thought-digression in the Padre Nuestro. But thou and I, nina, were always fellows-in-mischief and petty crimes. Small wonder that we have ever kept forgiveness on tap for one another."

He reached and laid his hand with a brotherly caress on her bright hair, but he brought it to rest on her sister's hand, a hot flush mounting to his cheeks as he did so.

"Love and guilt," said Mercedes, gently disengaging her hand and burying it in the shining tresses. "Love and guilt! How can the same breath breathe them? To overlook faults, to forbear, to forgive—these are the privileges of love, because 'to err is human.' Misfortune, sorrow, adversity—these cannot daunt nor diminish love. But guilt, shame, dishonor are other and more serious matters. A seared conscience, a tarnished name—what are these to love but a shroud and a sepulcher?"

"How can that be," he cried passionately, "when true love can no more die than God himself, whose attribute love is? As earth's fogs and mists to the all-purifying sun, such the heart's so-called shames and dishonors to love—love, the conqueror even of death. What are the violations of man's petty laws——treason, revolt, crime, to that solar center of life, love, which, sun-like, draws our hearts irresistibly, penetrating billows of mist, oceans of fog? Is the cloud the sun's winding-sheet? Can the ocean and all its mists become a sepulcher for the sun? Or tell me, is love rather a candle to be snuffed out at will, a mere taper that burns to the socket when our night is darkest?"

"Santo Cristo! there is no answering that," exclaimed Carma, bestirring herself at her grandfather's call; "Manuel is right; I feel it, sister, even I, who am but an 'infant'!"

Manuel arose and led the girl across to the room which the Senor Romero had just entered. At the door her whispered words detained him:

"Manuelito, are you going to confession?"

His flashing eyes sought her face.

"No, cara mia, not yet."

She gave his hand a quick pressure and disappeared through the door. He gazed a moment at the closed door, shrugged his shoulders, then turned back to the hammock, walking softly so as not to disturb the dozing Senora.

But Mercedes had arisen and was moving toward her own room. He intercepted her, placing the fountain between themselves and Dolores. At first he contented himself with smoothing out a fold of her lace mantle and gazing rapturously into her averted face. Of a sudden she turned to him and startled him with Cara's very question:

"Manuel, are you going to confession?"

His eyes wavered and fell, and there was a half gasp in his answer:

"No, not till—not yet——"

The ensuing silence was painful.

"Not until my dagger comes to me again?"

"What! the Romero dagger again?" he asked quickly. "Ah, but I will search the shops for one of many times its value, or have one made its exact counterpart—jewels, crucifix handle and all."

She shook her head slowly, a pained look on her face.

"It is not the dagger, nor its value, but its return. I will not ask you to go to the Padre. Only lay the missing dagger in my hand——"

"That your heart may believe; that the candle may not burn too low!" he ended for her, speaking bitterly and turning from her.

"'Love thinketh no evil,'" she said gently, laying her hand over his on the fountain's rim.

The simple act, so unusual for her, sent a flame to his head and a delicious fire through all his veins. Unable to utter a word, he bore her hand to his hot cheek, where she allowed it to remain an instant before she withdrew it, to say, hastily, as Dolores was stirring and gathering up her fancy-work:

"Nay, my heart more than believes, it pleads; but in this, the heart should not, must not, lead. Look you: On that fatal afternoon you borrow my dagger. You and Lieutenant Beverley have had words only the evening before. You are gone the afternoon, and are not yourself even when, at a late hour, Dolores and I return to camp. Grandfather notices the coincidence, and Carma's concern for you during that awful period of suspense and search throws her into the nervous illness from which she has not yet sufficiently recovered to allow a breath upon the subject in her presence. He was her friend as well as mine. Since our return grandfather is troubled, though silent; yet I alone know of your hot words with the missing man. We are all suffering, praying, believing; but you, from whom a word would suffice—you are silent. Manuel, Manuel, my more than brother, why do you not utter the words for which our hearts are aching?"

His head had sunk lower and lower while she spoke, until now it rested on his arm on the fountain's edge.

"That a Romero should doubt the unchanging heart of a Romero!" he said.

"Solo Dios es immutable," replied Mercedes solemnly. "Father Cadena says that nothing earthly is worthy of faith. Oh, why will the human heart cling to the fleeting, the changeful, the erring, when the Church holds all that the soul craves—the everlasting, the immutable, the holy?"

"Que hora es?" broke in Dolores, anxious to end the interview. But Mercedes did not heed her. A strange, peaceful light had come into her face, and she continued:

"Why, He alone knows who helps us in the unequal strife, the Church against the world. I have prayed——"

"Mercedes, Mercedes!" groaned the young man, "talk not thus! You wring my heart; you crush my hope. Earthly rivals are not invincible, but the Church, the holy life"—His voice died away.

"Manuel esta malo," said Dolores, laying her hand pityingly upon his bowed head.

Mercedes turned away, the lines of pain deepening on her face. "Will you go to the Padre on Saturday?"

"I—I will try to find it for you," he answered, and then, despite the Senora's presence, he caught the girl's hand, pleading between the kisses he burned upon it: "Only trust me, my Saint, only trust me!"

An hour later Carma found him on the self-same spot, his face hidden on his folded arms.

"You and Mercedes have disagreed, and you are grieving. What is the trouble, caro? Perhaps I can help you."

Without moving or looking up he replied: "She conditions my restoration to her favor upon the return of her dagger, and I cannot return it—you know I cannot."

"Mercedes is very exacting," said Carma coldly, as she moved away.

CHAPTER III.

"Sergeant Gilman has arrived, and will be shown up if the Senor will see him," said Felipe, the attendant at the door of Detective Jerrold's apartments in the officer's quarters.

"Muy bueno, Felipe."

"You see, Gilman," Edward Jerrold was saying an hour later when the two had come to their second cigars and their third bottle of wine, "you see, I have all the details and all the clues, except such as I may come upon in Beverley's own papers which you say are with his traps at Diablo yet. I'll take a run down there soon, after I have looked over the ground a bit further. Then, something might be gained from a knowledge of Beverley's habits and character. I've seen nothing of him and heard but little for the past ten years. What do you know? I shall depend upon you in these little matters while I'm getting the hang of this affair. What sort of a fellow has the Lieutenant grown to be?"

"Well, sir, I, as a private, had little intercourse with him socially, not being in his class. He was a fine officer and a good fellow; a little gay socially, moving way up; had a mistress somewhere in Santa Fe—never knew who, of course, as the Lieutenant knew how to keep his own secrets."

"Hum—yes," murmured Jerrold. "Like to get hold of this woman. Perhaps I can. How did these notes of hers come to him—by mail?"

"No, by Mexican boys, a different one each time. Great secrecy, great caution; meetings not very frequent. Some married woman, away up socially, we of the ranks sized it up."

"Quite likely; no common woman, if I knew Beverley. I must find her. Now, about these Romeros. They are here?"

"Yes, all of them, though I believe the old Senor will soon be going to the City of Mexico; goes every year about this time."

"What sort of fellow is the nephew?"

"Very capable; manages the entire estate, both here and in Old Mexico. Quite agreeable—to his equals; otherwise, reserved and unflinchingly haughty."

"Interested in either of the Senoritas?"

"His devotion to both amounts to a passion, though they are all very clannish, very exclusive. He is scheduled to marry the younger, the favorite granddaughter; though every one sees his passion for the elder, the beauty, every one save the beauty herself, who does not seem to want to see. Such a magnificent form and carriage! Such eyes! By George! your heart would come through your mouth, Jerrold, at first sight of her; and how must that poor devil stand it, right there in the same house with her?"

The detective smiled. "Maybe it would and maybe it wouldn't. Ten years on the force doesn't leave much of a heart to a fellow. Beverley was intimate with this family?"

"Why, he went there some, occasionally escorting the elder in public, and Don Manuel, the younger, the grandfather, or Senora Dolores invariably accompanies the young people, for they have very strict notions. By the way, the older girl is a devout Catholic (they all belong to San Miguel's because the old Senor inclines to the ancient church) and I have heard rumors of her joining the Sisters; she is there a great deal."

"So? Any rivalry between Beverley and this Spanish cavalier?"

"Well, no; though there was no love lost between them. The Lieutenant was at their camp near Diablo almost every evening, but he was never confidential with us

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fellows of the ranks. We used to josh him about the Spanish beauties, and he frankly confessed admiration for the elder. But then, who doesn't? Half the town is on tiptoe when she drives out—every masculine creature, from the bishop down to the native burro-driver!"

"Did you search their camp the night of the disappearance?"

"No search was made that night, as no anxiety was felt. The next afternoon we went through the canon, the town and all the neighboring camps and pueblos. It was a deucedly delicate matter there at the Romero camp, I'm telling you, for the men have Old World notions, and we knew they would forcefully resent the slightest word amiss—resent it in a most effective way, at that. But the search was a mere matter of form, the officer explained, and they aided us heartily, all save the ladies, of course, one of whom was ill. Which? I don't know, as I was then unacquainted, and, anyway, we dared not enter their tent."

"I should have done so."

"You do not know the Romero men."

"Did they help you search the canon?"

"Don Manuel did; Senor Romero is a very old man."

"When did they move on?"

"In about three days, if I remember, when the young lady was able to move."

"Now, Gilman, have we covered all the ground? Have you told me all the little things? Rack your memory, for in cases of this sort 'tis the 'trifles light as air' that are the 'confirmations strong as proofs from Holy Writ.'"

The Sergeant thought for a while, then said: "I have not mentioned that just as the Lieutenant left us to descend into the canon he flourished a small flask, and said something about 'Now for the Senorita's "diabolical water,"' and there had been some bantering that morning about getting some of the 'magic water' from the stream in the bottom of the chasm. He had asked the bridge gang foreman as to the easiest point of descent."

"So it was known beforehand that he was going down! Well?"

"When we searched the Romero camp—and this is the singular part—there on the ground, near the ladies' tent, was that identical bottle—I could swear it!—filled, a flat wine flask with a silver top. I did not think of it then, and the officer did not know of it; but when we passed over the place, after they had broken camp, there beside a stone was the flask smashed into a hundred pieces."

"You brought away the top, of course?"

"I went back and got it, after what you wrote about the little things."

"I shall want it."

The detective relapsed into silence that lasted some time, during which he sat knitting his brows and muttering under his breath. At length he seemed to have dovetailed his data to his liking, for he cleared his brow and said lightly, reaching for his wine glass:

"Have had a romantic adventure already in your romantic old town. Out on Tesque road, distressed damsel and her chaperone, minus their own proper conveyance; the daintiest slip of a girl, with the yellowest hair, and eyes as blue and inviting as her flowers, who spoke in the most liquid Spanish——"

"And was the chaperone a very dragoness, a tall, commanding Mexican woman who understood but little English?"

"Sure. And of course I understood no Spanish, for the time, and you should have heard her rebuke the young lady's indiscretion all in the aforesaid liquid Spanish—hers, the blue-eyed, innocent——"

"Carma Romero and her chaperone, Senora Dolores Mendez!"

"I thought so," chuckled the detective; "I judged so at the time. Gilman, I am just that lucky. Things always come my way. We'll get to the bottom of this, soon; find the true criminal. Will these Romeros be at the ball at the Quarters Friday night?"

"Yes, dragoness and all. But, Jerrold, you're way off. There's not a breath against this family. Besides, even supposing one were guilty of anything, there would be no breaking through the defense afforded by the protection of all the others."

"Good!" commented the detective, rising; "good!" he repeated. "You and I will be at the ball, Gilman, and you will introduce me. I am a friend of yours from Baltimore, here for my health—see?"

CHAPTER IV.

Carma Romero reclined on the cushion-piled divan in the darkened parlor, with Dolores by her side, when Mr. Jerrold was announced. It was Saturday, the day after the military ball. Of the family, only Carma and her chaperone had attended the ball, Mercedes having been called to the bedside of a sick friend, just as she was ready, and Manuel going as far as Lamy (Santa Fe main line) with Senor Romero on his journey to Old Mexico.

Manuel was not yet home, and Mercedes was over at the Sisters' Academy, having been persuaded to leave Carma's side upon that young lady's assurance that she felt quite well again. For Carma had swooned away on the ballroom floor in the midst of her first waltz, and had been brought home; and Mercedes, hastily summoned, had watched beside her the remainder of the night.

Mr. Jerrold came to inquire for the Senorita's health. He was full of self-reproach, since the waltz that had overtaxed her had been his waltz. Waltzing was all but a passion with him; and she waltzed so divinely! Was he much to blame?

He ensconced himself in a chair before the divan on which she sat, his face full of undisguised admiration at the picture she made, with her pale yellow hair against the blue satin of the cushions.

To Senora Mendez he had ventured in schoolboy Spanish, "A los pies de V., Senora," to which she had murmured the conventional "Be[illegible] a V. la mano, caballero," and relapsed into silence, after Carma had translated a few polite phrases between them.

Carma regretted the absence of her sister; she would doubtless be home shortly. Ah, but he must not tarry, since she herself was not well. Had the little Senorita a habit of fainting, and was she aware that she talked in these semi-conscious states?

The girl looked up quickly, searching his face keenly. Her sister and her maid had told her that she sometimes talked in her sleep, but she had never learned that any one talked while swooning.

No? Well, she had done so, as they had borne her from the ballroom last night—had talked of a dagger and a crucifix of pearls, and had begged some one named "Manuel" to take her out of a dark cave that was miles and miles from everywhere—a very Inferno.

The sharp-eyed detective glanced up swiftly, but she was smiling at him over the top of her fan, and saying lightly:

"Ah, yes, a tiny dagger with a crucifix handle, a plaything belonging to my sister."

"I see," said the detective, rising to take his departure, "and she seems to have lost it. And the gallant knight upon whom you called so repeatedly—your sister's also?"

He, too, was speaking lightly, but there was something ominous in his tone, in his very deliberation of speech and manner. His impertinent questions called for severe rebuke—if only Mercedes were there! But though her eyes were flashing, her lips were still smiling as she said:

"Our cousin, Senorito, who is absent from home today, a fact to be regretted, since he would take such pleasure in answering the Senorito's questions, in giving the Senorito entire satisfaction."

There was a quivering little menace in the emphasis on the last word, which he saw fit to overlook.

"Come with me to the piazza," he muttered under his breath, turning and bowing low to Dolores; "I've a further word with you—an important word."

He moved toward the door, something in his manner compelling her attendance. Dolores arose also and moved forward with an astonished "Que le pide a V. ese hombre?" but Carma, unheedful, managed to catch her drapery over a thorny rose branch of the lattice; and while he stooped to disengage it the man whispered rapidly:

"You told much in your delirium, Senorita, and if you love your cousin you will join me in the plaza tonight at eleven, near the stand. I have much to say, and something to give you—something you value."

"It—it—is not—the—her dagger?" She grasped the lattice for support.

"How could that be??" He was standing erect now, ill-concealed triumph in his cruel eies. "How could it be here in Santa Fe, when it is in the dark cave, miles and miles from everywhere?"

"Oh, the cave," she laughed, retreating toward her chaperone, "that is an old playhouse of our childhood days right here in the hills beyond the ruined fort. I will show it to you, and we will hunt for the lost plaything."

"Adios. At eleven, then," interrupted Jerrold, affirming rather than asking, as, bowing himself from the piazza, he came all but face to face with Mercedes, who was entering.

"Que le pide a V. ese hombre?" insisted Dolores, grasping Carma's arm.

"For the privilege of calling again, which I denied him," returned the girl, sinking into a piazza chair with a deep sigh.

"What man?" asked Mercedes.

By way of reply her sister held out her dancing tablet of the night before, with which she had been toying, adding by way of explanation:

"Sergeant Gilman's friend from Baltimore who, by the way, was the gentleman who brought us home in his carriage the day Tonia ran away."

Mercedes face went white.

"Why is he here? What has he been saying to you? Where is Manuel?"

"He called to inquire for my health, naturally, since it was while waltzing with him that I was overcome last night. Manuel has not returned. What is the matter with you, Mercedes?"

The elder sister was pacing the piazza, agitation in her manner.

"Keep nothing from me, dear Carma, as you love Manuel! Tell me all that passed between you, I pray you!"

"Virgen Maria! Why 'as I love Manuel'? Why do you talk in puzzles to frighten poor Carma?"

"Nay, dear sister," said Mercedes, striving to control her emotion, "but this Edward Jerroid is no friend of Sergeant Gilman; he is one of the cleverest detectives in the Government service!"

Carma stared with wide, frightened eyes at her sister.

"Father Cadena told me not half an hour ago—told me that he is thought to be working on the Beverley case."

"And what has the Beverley case to do with the Romeros?"

"This: Sergeant Gilman's boy Felipe was at San Miguel's this morning. He has heard our names repeated in conversations between his master and this supposed friend."

"And what else?"

"Nothing; for Felipe understands not a word of English. But you must know that our names can but be drawn into a case so mysterious when we, Lieutenant Beverley's friends, were encamped upon the spot at the time of his disappearance. I have not spoken of this before to you, Carmita, because you were not well, and I did not wish to alarm you about Manuel."

"Why Manuel? I do not understand," said Carma, bewildered.

"Because the two had words over a matter only the night before that fatal day; I, myself, overheard them. Sergeant Gilman may know of this quarrel; and you can surely see how such knowledge would place our cousin in the eyes of those who do not know him."

Carma said "Ah!" with a long breath, and lay back against Dolore's sholuder, with eyes closed, while Mercedes continued her walk, murmuring: "I wish he would come!"

After a quarter of an hour's silence, Mercedes, thinking her sister asleep, signed to Dolores to remain quiet, and stealing softly to her own room, flung herself down before the image of the Madonna in the alcove.

At dark the carriage of her friend came for her. The friend was dying. Would she come? All would be over in a few hours. She would see how Carma felt. Carma never felt better in her life, and urged, insisted that she go. True, Dolores was going over to San Miguel's, but was not Luisa, their maid, there? And would not their cousin be home now at any hour?

Mercedes kissed her and was driven away. Carma seemed bright and full of spirits, so all was well at home; but Mercedes' heart was sad over the contemplated loss of her friend, and was filled with a vague uneasiness when her thoughts turned to Manuel. He would surely come on the midnight train from the south, when she would at once tell him all she had learned from the Padre.

Then she composed herself and prepared for her ministrations to the dying. The messenger had been right; all was over before midnight, and, leaving the Padre and Sister Celeste with the dead, she re-entered the carriage, with orders for the depot.

But the train had been in some minutes and had discharged its passengers, so she turned toward home. She dismissed the carriage at the end of the catalpa walk. Half-way to the house she was roused from her revery by a low moan, and, looking up, saw the form of a woman lying across the piazza steps, and a man bending over her—Carma and Manuel!

She was beside them in an instant.

"What does this mean?" she cried, kneeling by the unconscious girl and pulling away the heavy mantle that completely enfolded her head.

"I might ask the same question of you, my Mercedes," replied the young man gently, stooping and lifting the limp form in his arms, "for I just found her here and thus. Lead the way and bring a light."

As she sped to do his bidding, Carma stirred in his arms and spoke his name.

"It is I, little one of our hearts. Have no fear," he whispered reassuringly, as he laid her on her own bed. "Now some wine," he added to the trembling Mercedes, and as he arranged the inert form among the cushions the girl opened her eyes and pushed into his hand something round and hard—the silver top of a wine flask! He had barely time to transfer it to his pocket when Mercedes reappeared with the wine.

Carma struggled to a sitting position, staring and smiling into the faces of the two.

"Ay Dios!" she exclaimed. "Then it was you following me? Why did you not make yourself known, and not frighten poor Carma so?" Then to her sister, "Only over to Our Lady of Guadaloupe—he will tell you."

Mercedes turned inquiringly to Manuel who, with his eyes fastened on Carma's face, slowly inclined his head in the affirmative.

"Our Lady of Guadaloupe," he murmured, whereupon the girl fell back as one lifeless; and though they worked with her faithfully, they and the frightened Senora, she did not regain consciousness for more than an hour.

After a burst of tears and incoherent words she slept quietly, and they watched in silence beside her, each thinking his own thoughts. The moonlight waned, the lamp burned dim. Dolores, reclining on a couch at the bed's foot, was long since asleep.

When Carma roused, began to caress Manuel's hand and to mutter, "Forgive! forgive!" the young man arose and, taking Mercedes by the hand, led her in his insistent way to the couch of the adjoining room. The little one would be herself in a short time, he assured her, and why should she weary herself with useless vigils, after her watch beside her dying friend? He had frightened Carma by following her from the church, and he would ask pardon for his offense when she awoke. Then with a tender "Hasta manana," he returned to Carma's room, closing the door carefully after him.

Thus assured, the elder sister sank to sleep soothed by the murmur of earnest voices in the adjoining room; and her last thought, mingled with her prayer, was:

"Ah, he is pleading for forgiveness; he is making his peace."

This highly interesting story will be brought to a conclusion in next week's issue of the Ledger. Any one subscribing for the Ledger is entitled to our free cameras and patterns as advertised on pages thirteen and fifteen.

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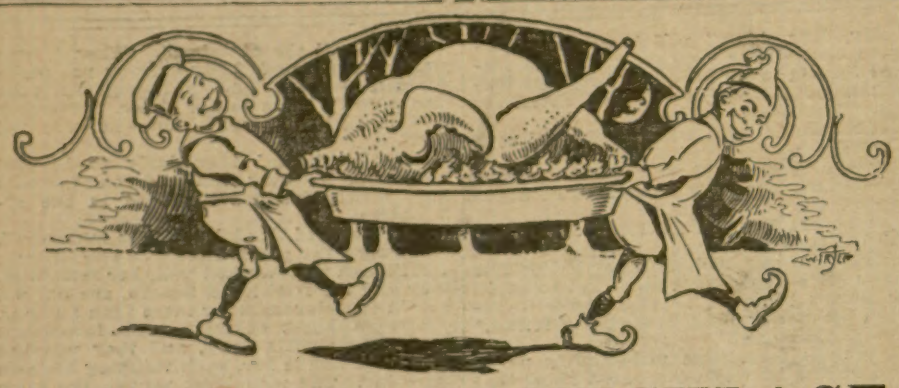

CLEOPATRA'S NECKLACE;

OR,

The Curse of the White Sapphire.

By T. C. HARBAUGH.

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CHAPTER IX.

FROM THERMUTHIS TO—WHOM?

In a small house not far from Ruth Jansen's domicile, but on another street, lived the woman known as "Old Mag." She did not have many callers owing to several superstitions connected with her career, and before I was lucky enough to get audience with her I knew all that her neighbors knew.

I had heard from her own lips, as the reader already knows, that at one time she had lived with the Marlowes, in fact, had nursed Cyrille, but it was not so much to discover anything about the early life of the fair young girl now in Europe or on the way thither with St. John Marlowe, as to get other information which I coveted.

Therefore, when I bade Preston, the jeweler, good night and turned into the street where the little old creature lived, I had not ceased to muse over the pearl which had been sold to the lapidaries by Sydney Marlowe.

Mag received me with a startled cry and I was taken through a foul-smelling corridor to a room, perhaps eight by ten, where a huge cat of inky blackness sat perched on a table in the full glare of a lamp.

When the door had been shut behind me the little woman turned upon me like an automaton worked with a spring.

"What have you found out about the murder and the gems?" she asked.

"I will speak of such things later. I hear that you work in black magic as a pastime, that you——"

"They lie about me, the neighbors do," she broke in. "I am a simple old woman; but now and then I do pick up a little, catering to the needs of the ladies."

"You tell fortunes, then?"

"No, I show them the past and the present and let them do the rest."

I looked the speaker over from head to foot. She was but little over four feet tall, with a sharp, angular body, long hands and a pair of beady black eyes.

"They tell me that you can call up spirits from the vasty deep," I resumed.

"Do they? Well, that is not the first advertisement they have given Mag Geffron," she twittered with a grimace. "But whom do you want to see?"

"I would like to see the present holder of the white sapphire."

I paused to watch the play of color on her face, which, despite her years, had but few wrinkles.

"Come, then, into the abode of the spirits," she answered, with a gesturing hand. "I will do my best for you."

She led me from the room of the cat into another that adjoined it. The latter apartment was larger, the ceiling higher, but almost dark. I made out to catch the outlines of a cot in one corner, a table and something that looked like a quilt hanging at one side of the chamber.

As my eyes became accustomed to the semi-gloom a strange yet not unpleasant odor smote my senses and I instantly recalled what Cyrille had told me about the one she had experienced in Marble House the night of the mystery.

Suddenly I felt my senses leaving me. I tried to recover, but the fragrance became more and more subtle until the whole room seemed permeated with it, and at last I found myself sinking into what seemed to be a state of paradisiacal bliss.

While I seemed to have lost the power of volition, the sense of sight remained, and presently there came into being before me in a circle of light the figure of a tall girl. I saw that she was dark of skin and clad in the costume of the ancient Egyptians. She stood beside a statue, eagle-headed, and at her feet flowed a sluggish stream which barely moved the tall rushes at its fringe.

"It is Thermuthis, the daughter of the Pharaohs," I found myself saying while I gazed." The was the first owner of Cleopatra's necklace; she was the finder of Moses. In the name of the black arts——"

The vision vanished. In its place came a great palace with the Sphynx in the dim background. I looked upon the street of an ancient city, with slaves prostrating themselves in the dust, and slowly there came into view a beautiful woman borne by highly-dressed slaves. She reclined on a silken throne, the trimmings of which seemed solid gold. I knew that I was gazing at Cleopatra.

In quick succession there passed before me the subsequent but unfortunate owners of the white sapphire—Saul, the Cencis and the Borgias, the lovely but unlucky Madam de Medici, and Marie Antoinette.

I forgot in my amazement that the hand of Mag Geffron was at the bottom of this magic. Half stupefied, I looked and wondered, wishing that this panorama of the royal past would last for hours. Now I was transported to the Nile and now again I stood on the steps of the Tuileries and saw Marie Antoinette riding to the guillotine with the madness of Paris around her.

Suddenly the whole scene changed. There came forth from I know not where a stately woman dressed in the height of the present fashion. I saw her jewels, I noticed the heavy rings that adorned her massive hands, I did not miss the large face, not beautiful but stern, with lips that spoke of cruelty and determination. This woman was of the present, the others had been of the past; she had centuries between her and the child of the Pharaohs and more than one hundred years barred her from the times of the unfortunate French Queen.

"Watch her well," said a voice from the darkness. "Avenger of blood, look well at the woman before you! She will come into your life before your quest is done. She is the present owner of the white sapphire."

I tried to cry, but my tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of my mouth.

"Look once more," said the same voice, and the tall woman in silks vanished, but another scene came before me.

It was that of a mansion not built after the manner of mansions of this country. The architecture was French, but not of the present century. I saw a carriage drive up to the great door of the grand structure, and a woman come out. She was the same who had just vanished. Behind her slouched a man who glared at her with the fury of a tiger.

"Marlowe!" cried I.

"Avenger of blood, you shall see all this and more. I have given up my life to show you these things. God help me and bring you the vengeance you crave!"

The thrall was suddenly broken; I seemed to be tumbled from the cot in a heap and the light came back to the little room.

Some moments elapsed before I could command myself. The strange perfume lingered, but as a dream lingers after the sleeper wakes; my brain whirled, but I could stand erect.

I looked around the room for Mag Geffron. What had become of the presiding genius of the witch's den? Something purred at my feet, and looking down I saw the black cat whose eyes glowed like coals of fire above the carpet.

Then I noticed at one side of the chamber a heavy curtain that seemed to sway a little under unseen power. The demon cat slipped between my legs and disappeared behind the curtain. I followed and pulled the substance aside.

The cry that leaped from my lips I could not keep back.

On the floor just behind the heavy folds lay a diminutive figure. The face I could not see, for it was pressed to the carpet, but the form I knew. It was Old Mag!

In another instant I had stooped and my eager hands turned the body face upward. Then I uttered another cry. The strange creature, the dwarfish queen of black art, had played with the occult for the last time. Mag Geffron was dead, and when I raised the corpse from the floor the cat, with a fiendish scream, alighted on one of my shoulders like a bolt shot from perdition.

CHAPTER X.

STARTLING REVELATIONS.

With Mag Geffron out of the way and her lips sealed forever, I turned to the man accused by Preston of the theft of the white sapphire, if not the murder of Mrs. Marlowe.

I did not anticipate much trouble in finding him, for I had already tracked him home. I desired to stand face to face with him once more, now that I knew he was not Mark Gray, but Sydney Marlowe, the disowned.

Mine was not a long journey from Mag's house to the little building that sheltered my man, but I was doomed to disappointment. The woman who opened the portal in response to my knock informed me that her lodger had paid his score but a short time before and was no longer an inmate of her house.

I now regretted that I had not followed at his heels when I had him at my mercy, but it was too late, for the bird had flown. Of course I could have turned my attention to Ruth Jansen, but I did not care to confront her yet awhile.

The mysteries that had been revealed to me by the dead witch puzzled me not a little. How she had summoned up from the past pictures of the one-time possessors of the necklace was beyond my ken, for I was not familiar with the black arts as practiced today, though I had read a good deal concerning the masters of magic of the past.

The events of the last few hours seemed more like a dream than a reality, but I knew that I had gone to Old Mag's house; I still felt the effects of the subtle perfume and wondered if it were the same which had overcome Cyrille at Marble House. I was sure that the young girl would write me upon her arrival in Europe, though I had no claims upon her remembrance, although her sweetness and her situation, for I felt that she was in peril, commanded more than my sympathy.

The next few days were mostly without incident. Preston twitted me about the seller of the Cleopatrain pearl and I hunted the city over for Sydney Marlowe.

If he had certain haunts I was unable to find them, but one day in glancing over the list of passengers of an outgoing steamer I was startled to find there the name of "Mark Gray."

My man had gone to Europe!

I knew that Preston would laugh at my discomfiture should he discover it, therefore I gave him a wide berth; but a greater surprise than any I had yet experienced was in store for me.

The brilliant opera season had lately been inaugurated and the new opera which had captured Paris was on the stage. With an evening off I determined to attend, and the rise of the curtain found me in my chair.

As the stage shone forth in its magnificent settings, glorious in light, I happened to glance at one of the lower boxes where a brilliant party was assembled.

In an instant my gaze became riveted on a face in the second row of chairs.

"My God!"

The ejaculation came unbidden from my lips and the next moment I was the center of a number of stares. Those on both sides of me turned their heads, wondering what had called forth the cry, and the man on my left touched my arm.

"Are you ill, sir?" he asked sympathetically.

"Not at all, thank you, but will you kindly tell me who occupies the lower left-hand box?"

He looked in that direction a moment and again turned to me.

"The Bradley-Smiths," he said. "I see they have a guest in their box—Mrs. Harcourt, the widow of the banker."

"Mrs. Harcourt?"

"Yes, the lady in the second row of chairs, the one now using the lorgnette."

It was the face that had startled me so.

"Do you know her?" asked my strange companion.

"I have not that honor. But the moment I saw her I thought of a friend who greatly resembles her, and my ejaculation was indicative of my astonishment."

The man smiled.

"I was not aware that Mrs. Harcourt resembles any one," he replied.

Just then the orchestra drowned other conversation and the opera began. As for me I heard nothing; I saw nothing but the strong face in the opera box, the large, sensual face, indicative of cruelty and determination. I watched it as the opera proceeded and when the curtain fell I turned again to my vis-a-vis.

"Mrs. Harcourt is very wealthy," I believe?"

"Quite so. Her husband left her all his wealth, which runs into the millions. It is rumored that she is to marry a Parisian Count; but one hears so many rumors about her lately."

I had not. Never had I heard her name until it fell from Cyrille's tongue when she told me that Mrs. Marlowe's visitor on the night of the crime had been Veronica Harcourt.

"She is a strange creature, but is said to be good hearted withal," continued the man beside me. "She gives liberally to the poor and has lately endowed an orphan asylum in the West End. Well, she ought to do something for the helpless, seeing as how her husband waded through human hearts to the millions he made. I pity the man who gets her."

"With her charitable disposition?"

"With all that. She is childless. I have heard that she has a sister somewhere who, on account of a tiff between them in childhood, she never helped, not even with the millions at her command. But sisters do strange things sometimes."

I was curious.

"What became of that sister? You seem to be familiar with the history of Mrs. Harcourt."

"More familiar with her history than with her," he smiled. "Well, sir, would you believe it? That sister was the opposite of Veronica Harcourt in physique. The woman in yon box is a giantess; her sister was a dwarf. I don't know that the disowned one ever asked Mrs. Harcourt for a penny of her wealth. She was too proud for that. It is said that she became a witch, one of those strange creatures who prey upon mankind through the black arts, astrology and all that. I used to see her after dark skulking down a narrow street; but I have missed her for some time."

"Pardon me, sir, but at first you gave me to understand that you had only heard a story about this sister. Now you impress me otherwise."

"Do I? Well, I have come down to facts, or what I believe to be facts. I became interested in this sister of Veronica Harcourt. I discovered that she went by the name of Mag Geffron."

I fell back and looked at the man.

"I surprise you, I see," he said.

"Only because I am intensely interested," said I.

"Well, here is my card," and he handed me a bit of glazed cardboard upon which was engraved the name of Earl Stefface.

So this was the man for whom Cyrille had mistaken me in Marble House!

I had learned much about him, and perhaps would have recognized him had he worn a mustache, but the clean upper lip told me that he had shaved recently.

The rest of the opera did not interest me.

On the sidewalk I watched Mrs. Harcourt enter her carriage and drive away.

Mag Geffron lying dead in her shabby home the sister of this rich woman! And the old witch had shown me the face of Veronica Harcourt on her occult canvass, with the information that she possessed Cleopatra's necklace!

If this were true, how had she come by it? Had Sydney Marlowe, now on the broad deep, sold it to her?

"I will see this creature," said I. "And before I leave her I will let her know that her sister lies dead in her den."

At that moment some one brushed past me and I caught the flash of a face.

Ruth Jansen, the nurse!

CHAPTER XI.

MR. STEFFACE SHOWS HIS TEETH.

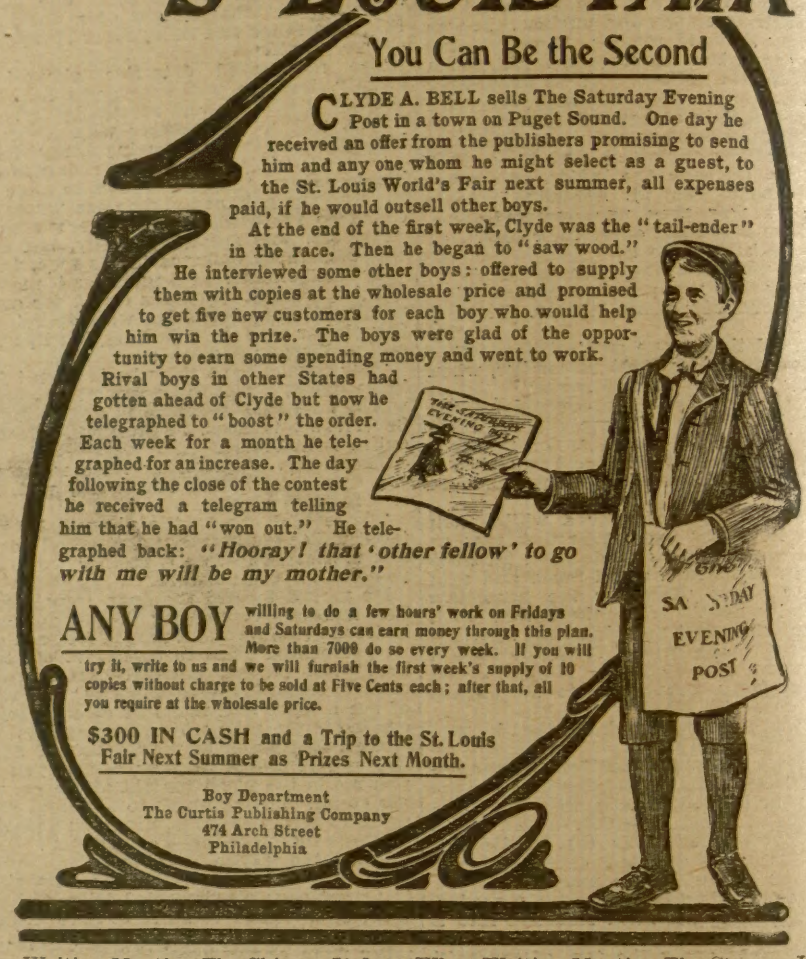
I was still watching Ruth Jansen when a hand was laid softly on my arm and I looked into the face of Earl Stefface.

"I see," said he, "that you are still interested in Mrs. Harcourt. She is quite an interesting character, a little exclusive and with a mind of her own. Would you mind, sir, to come with me?"

I wondered if he had discovered my identity, but beating down my mental question I turned and told him that I would follow him.

He ordered a cab and we entered. I did not quite catch the orders he gave the driver, but leaned back in the seat to await developments.

Personally, I had never met the man before. He was about my own height, and,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had he worn a mustache, I would not have wondred at Cyrille's mistake.

Our ride was soon terminated and in another moment I was seated in a luxuriously-furnished room on a second floor in a well-to-do portion of the city.

Earl Stefface did not seat himself, but remained standing against the mantel, with one arm resting carelessly upon it while he regarded me in a manner I did not fancy.

"I thought I recognized you at the opera," he said, looking at me strangely. "You are Tracy Tellfair."

"You are correct."

"You are a detective."

"That is my profession."

"Well, Mr. Tellfair, I have business of importance with you."

"Then you can proceed."

He quietly lit a cigar and sent a few white smoke wreaths toward the ceiling.

"If I mistake not you are very anxious to solve the mystery of the missing sapphire."

"And of the death of Mrs. Marlowe as well."

"Exactly. I will not ask you for a report of your success to date. But I have this to say: It would be to your advantage if you would drop this game and turn your attention to other mysteries."

I was astounded. That Earl Stefface should counsel me thus went through me like an electric bolt.

"You are very plain about it," said I.

"Plainness is one of my characteristics. There is no reason in the world why I should not be plain with you. You are aware, perhaps, that St. John Marlowe and Miss Cyrille are not in this country."

"They have sailed for Europe."

"Just so. A continuance of your chase may bring untold suffering upon them."

"How so?"

"It may involve the young lady in very unpleasant environments. She is fragile and nervous and——"

I held up my hand in a deprecatory gesture.

"You do not mean to insinuate that Miss Marlowe is in any way connected with the crimes?"

"I mean, sir," his voice suddenly grew harsh, "I mean, sir, that you must not pursue this matter to the end."

"I take it, then, that you think the young lady would become involved?"

"Look here. I am to marry Miss Marlowe."

"With her consent?"

His face suddenly grew dark.

"Whether with her consent or not I am to become her lord and master. I do not want the shadow of suspicion directed against her. I will not submit to it."

"It has not led in that direction."

"But you men are merciless. I have had some experience with your craft."

"But you don't think that I would follow a clue that led toward such a woman as Miss Cyrille Marlowe?"

"You are all alike," he said bitterly. "Come, Mr. Tellfair, you must give over this hunt."

"I cannot."

"You mean you will not. If you pursue this chase any further I shall consider it a duty to interfere."

"Very well," said I, rising; "then you can interfere if you wish."

I had made up my mind not to be put off the scent by a man like Earl Stefface.

That he was dangerous when his passions were aroused I did not doubt, but this did not turn me from my purpose. The declaration that he was to marry Cyrille only incensed me. I could not for a moment believe that the fair girl loved him; I doubted not that it was a compact of some sort between St. John Marlowe and this gambler by which the life and happiness of Cyrille were to be sacrificed. Her love was not to be taken into account by the makers of the compact, and the only satisfaction I took from the whole matter was the fact that, for the present, at least, the girl was beyond his reach with a sea between them.

"I give you three minutes in which to make up your mind," coolly continued Stefface.

"I do not need one. My mind is made up already."

"You refuse, then?"

"Irrevocably so."

We were standing face to face on the rich carpet, with the bright light in our faces. I saw his cheeks lose their color and in the depths of his eyes I detected the gleam of the tiger.

"All right," he said. "You have decided. In the future, when you recall what has passed in this room, you will have no one to blame but yourself."

He crossed the room and opened a drawer in a desk.

"Will you recede from your determination if the necklace is placed in your hands?"

"No; that would be letting the darker mystery remain unsolved. It would let the guilty go free."

The hand which he withdrew from the drawer was empty. I wondered if his fingers had touched Cleopatra's jewels.

"Then go," said Earl Stefface. "Go out, and don't blame any one but yourself for what follows."

"Is that a threat, sir?"

"Take it as you like. There shall be no explanation."

"Mr. Stefface," said I, "I have known of you for some time. This is, I believe, our first personal encounter. You have seen fit to attempt bribery. You would seduce me from the line of duty and at the same time you hint of dark things which might involve the woman whom you are to wed. I will say boldly that Miss Marlowe is in no way connected with either of the mysteries of Marble House. Your words cannot taint her in my mind. What is more, that young woman is unhappy and in peril, and you know that she loves you not."

Instead of the outbreak of passion which I expected, he only laughed.

"Just as if love always enters into the marriage relation!" he exclaimed. "If you still pursue your investigations——"

"Which I shall do to the very end."

"You will regret it. You are simply one of those merciless trail dogs, one of those human bloodhounds that scent blood and then run down the first person who crosses your path. Don't cross mine! Don't interfere with my affairs in any manner. If you do, your life won't be worth the ash on the end of this cigar."

I answered him with a defiant smile and moved toward the door.

In another moment he was up with me and as his hand reached out to seize the knob in advance of me I threw up one hand and pushed him back.

A heavy curse broke over his white lips, and, maddened almost beyond endurance, I sprang forward and landed a blow full in his face which sent him reeling against the opposite wall.

As he struck the wall, shaking the pictures there, I opened the door and passed out, knowing that I had left a mortal foe behind me, one who would stoop to anything to baffle my hunt and do me the direst injury imaginable. I laughed at the situation when I thought of this, but I did not know that I was to meet this wretch again.

"It is Thermuthis, the daughter of the Pharoahs."

CHAPTER XII.

I FACE THE WIDOW HARCOURT.

Rocking her somewhat ponderous self in a luxurious arm-chair, surrounded by a lavish display of wealth, Mrs. Harcourt looked what she was—a woman of the wealthy world, wanting nothing to complete her happiness. The brilliant lights of the great room, with its pictures and other articles of refinement, added much to the scene. She had but to wish, and all that money could bestow upon any one was hers. She had buried her money-getting husband within a year, and, childless and independent, she needed nothing to make her station secure in the fashionable world.

Veronica Harcourt was not beautiful. Her face was large and inclined to coarseness, and the prominent lips which spoke of determination were worth looking at twice. There were jewels galore upon her hands, for she was fond of personal adornment, and, always well dressed, she was ready at all times to receive her friends.

It was amid such surroundings that she received me the night after my exciting interview with Earl Stefface. I had never crossed the Harcourt threshold before and, from what I had seen and heard of its owner, I had inwardly hoped that it would be my first and last visit.

The contrast between the two sisters, Mag Geffron and Veronica Harcourt, could not have been more striking. The one probably had been carried to the Potter's field unmourned by any one and forgotten, the other lived to dazzle the world with her riches and to come into the drama connected with the gems of Cleopatra.

Mrs. Harcourt switched her fan as I entered the room, and before looking up at me she glanced at the card I had sent in by the servant, a card which merely gave my name and said nothing about my profession.

We were alone.

"I have called," said I, "to inform you in regard to a matter which may be of some importance to you."

She did not start, but looked keenly at me and moved the fan languidly as though I were an unwelcome trespasser.

"I must acquaint you with the sudden death of your sister."

The fan quivered and nearly dropped from her hands. In an instant the languid brain had been fired.

"Sir," she said as she leaned toward me, "you speak in riddles," but her actions told me that the bolt had gone home. "I have no sister."

"But you had. She is dead."

Mrs. Harcourt sent a rapid look toward the door.

"You will please explain yourself," said she. "I do not understand at all."

"The woman called Mag Geffron died very suddenly and has been buried."

"How did she die?"

"She was found dead in her strange abode."

"By whom?"

"By myself."

Hrs. Harcourt seemed to take a long breath.

The tidings evidently pleased her.

"There was no violence connected with her death," I continued, watching the woman before me. "She succumbed to natural causes, though there was a little excitement beforehand. The woman lived a singular life. Doubtless you have heard of it."

"I don't know."

"She practiced the black arts. She could call up visions that startled people, and, I believe, numbered many prominent folks as her patrons."

"A sorceress, you mean."

"You might call her that if the race of sorceresses has not died out."

"We did not communicate with one another for the best of reasons. She was not altogether of my blood. Is that all you have to say, Mr. Tellfair?"

The innate coolness of the woman nonplussed me. She leaned back in her chair and began to fan herself as though I were the most commonplace visitor in the world.

The death of the disowned sister had not affected her in the least. As well might I have told her of the death of some poor washerwoman in the black district.

"It is not all I have to say," said I, determined not to let Mrs. Harcourt off so easily. "You visited your friend, the late Mrs. Marlowe, the night of the trogedy in Marble House?"

She did not change color as I half suspected she would.

"Do you keep tab on my calls, Mr. Tellfair?"

"Not at all, madam. It is the last thing I would attempt to do. But is it not true that you were at Marble House on the night of the seventeenth?"

"Certainly I was there."

"And you left Mrs. Marlowe well?"

"As well as could be expected."

"At what hour did you leave?"

"It might have been between nine and ten. I did not remain very late."

"The double tragedies happened, then, after the last named hour?"

"Really, sir, I cannot say."

Her provoking sang froid almost baffled me. I had encountered many cool women

(Continued on page fourteen.)

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Sometimes a man has a speaking acquaintance with the woman across the street and sometimes they know each other so well that they don't speak at all.

It is obviously incorrect to characterize some of those syndicate promoting schemes as gambling operations. In a gambling game the victim to be fleeced is allowed to win a little something once in a while.

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CHAPTER XI.—Continued.

Just as King came up, however, he raised his stake to four times its former amount, and—lost!

He gave a quick, low cry, then turned, for a firm hand fell on his shoulder, and Litchfield's cool voice said, kindly:

"I want to speak to you."

Half-dazed the boy rose and followed Litchfield, as did King.

Litchfield saw his friend, and nodded to him to accompany him and his young charge, and when they reached the seat upon which King had been sitting, Litchfield said quietly:

"See here, my boy, stripes are not becoming to any one, especially one who is liable to grow fleshy as his years add up."

The boy started, then said, nervously:

"Thank you for taking an interest in me, but pray lend me a few dollars, for I'm sure to win. My mistake was in raising my stake as I did. You will lend me just a few dollars?"

"Not one red cent."

The right hand, still a boy's hand, sought the hip pocket, but Litchfield laughed jarringly.

"No, young man, there is no fear of that. The fellow who robs his mother never has courage enough to shoot himself. Shame! It is bad enough to rob any one, but a mother."

The boy's ashen face bore witness to the truth of Litchfield's shrewd venture, for, as he told his companions later:

"He wasn't the make of boy to be in a position at his age to get hold of so much money, so I made a wild throw at his having stolen from his mother."

"How do you know?" he finally gasped.

"Because I do. Now, I'm going to do a little funny business with you, and do it chop, chop," using in his excitement one of the terms he had picked up in the Orient, an expression meaning in a hurry.

The boy's eyes rolled helplessly from the faces of the two men, for King now stood beside Litchfield.

"This gentleman is one of the big wigs up here. Look well at his face, Wadsworth, the face of a boy who robs his mother, so you can see that he isn't let in again, and then let's kick him out."

"But, my mother," sobbed the boy, now thoroughly frightened.

"Tomorrow I'm coming to see your mother," Litchfield rejoined; "and if you appear worth it, I will give her the money you lost, if not, this gentleman and I will put you in jail. Understand now," this very angrily, and upon the boy promising earnestly never to enter any place of a similar nature, the two men saw him depart, and then strolled toward the dining room.

"Faugh! I'm sick of it all," Litchfield said, wearily. "Excuse me for interrupting the party, you know, but I happened to see that baby, and so put in my oar."

"Glad you did. I was sick of it before I came. You were not interested at all, were you?"

"Not in the gambling, but the gamblers. I thought I might find my man here."

"I remember, but, Litchfield, my heart grows sick in thinking of my lost one. I believe you are right; I could not forgive the soil to the soul."

Litchfield stopped and looking earnestly into the man's face replied seriously:

"I will give you some advice which I believe is good."

"All right, what is it?"

"Get annoyed at my interfering if you want, but don't you know some real, nice, good girl?"

Instantly King's thoughts flew to Queenie.

"Yes. What, then?"

"Go to her. Tell her that your heart is almost broken, and ask her to give you a little love and sympathy. It is your only salvation, my boy."

King looked straight ahead, but said nothing. His thoughts were with Queenie and the tender sympathy she had shown. No need to tell her anything, for she knew it all. Would she marry him? Somehow something seemed to tell him that she would. No; he could not, that dear, dangerous face and that overwhelming perfume of the rich red clovers was too much, and he shook his head, and then said, hastily:

"Excuse me to the others, Litchfield. Here," thrusting a roll of bills into his hands, "square things up. I will see you again soon," and then disappeared, and a few moments felt the rain against his heated face as he trudged along the street, almost unconsciously bending his steps toward home.

CHAPTER XIII.

"The power of Love in all ages creates angels."

A charming room, with a beautiful woman as its sole occupant this same eventful night, if it could have found words to express what it saw and heard, might have shed considerable light upon several dark subjects. This room was one of a suite occupied by Thomas Litchfield and a lady who had been his companion for the past six months. She is not a stranger, this wondrously lovely creature, who half reclines upon a couch, covered with soft, oriental silks in which a dull, rich pink prevails, such a color as can be found in the red clover. The matchless figure is clad in some clinging draperies of the same exquisite shade, from which rises a head and shoulders beautiful enough to have driven an artist mad. Yet it all fades into nothingness; the richness of color and perfection of curve and movement, the moment one gazes into those eyes. If they were matchless, awe-inspiring, before their owner had stood face to face with sorrow—before passionate misery and despairing agony had left their imprint upon the fair face and driven the dagger of hopelessness into the young heart—what were they now!

The rain dashed against the plate glass, and the wind howled outside, as the beautiful woman leaned against the casement, having risen in weariness from the couch, and looked out at the belated passengers who hurried by.

"How miserably desolate," she said in a low tone, shivering as she spoke, "and yet not more so than I feel. Oh, what a fool you were!" How bitterly the words come from the soft lips which seemed made but for lover's kisses!

Throwing her arms above her head, she turned her eyes toward a console and looked at her full-length reflection.

"A blind, hapless fool, not to have been able to distinguish between a summer flirtation and real, true love!

"And yet I believe any woman, unless she were very wise, would have been deceived. I wonder, oh! I wonder, if every man goes so far in his idle protestations of affection!" Now the sweet lips quiver, but no tears rise to the gloomy eyes, bottomless, despairing; eyes which seem to reflect all the misery and woe of the world.

"How can men think it a noble thing to win a woman's love and then to thrust it aside! A broken toy—ah, no! worse than that, for the toy does not live and breathe. The toy has no long, weary hours to pass through; the toy cannot remember when it was loved and caressed." Deep, agonizing sobs shook the young figure, but still no tears came to quench the fire in the eyes.

Suddenly she heard a noise, and listened eagerly. The outer door opened, and she plainly heard some one moving.

"Tom," she called, and those who had heard the voice before the blight had fallen upon Clover Arden would scarcely have recognized it.

"Yes, pet; want me?" and Thomas Litchfield appeared at the door of her drawing-room, clad in his invernesse, with his opera hat under his arm.

"Is it very late?" she asked wistfully.

"Yes, dear, very late, but I know you want a little talk, so just wait a minute and I will come in," and he disappeared into his own room, while Clover resumed her position by the window. It was but a moment before she felt a light touch on her arm, and, turning, saw Tom standing by her side in immaculate evening dress, smiling, and as interested as though it were six, instead of three, o'clock.

"Oh, I'm glad you've come, dear," Clover said, turning and clinging to his arm, and his smile was almost angelic in its renunciation as he stooped and, drawing her into his arms, tenderly kissed the face which quivered under her brotherly caress.

"I could not sleep, Tom, dear, and so I waited until you came."

Still smiling, Tom drew the curtains close to hide the dreary outlook, then motioned her to an easy chair.

"Come, now, sit here, my little sister, and tell me just what is on your mind. Are the flowers to your liking?"

"They are beautiful," looking at the exquisite hothouse flowers which filled the room; "but, Tom, they are not——"

"Clovers?"

"No, and yet I do not believe I could stand them. You see, it was from the clover fields I last saw him. I first met him in my lovely fields when I was looking for the first blooms, and I last saw him from their foot, as the train bore him away from the foolish, wicked country girl."

"Not wicked, Clover darling," Tom rejoined quickly.

"Yes, wicked. I believed too easily; I should have waited until poor uncle knew about it, before I let myself love him so. Still, Tom, I have studied something out tonight," with a pitiful little attempt at gaiety.

"Yes, dear; tell me what it is."

The gas log was the only light in the room, but it flared up into the strong, good face of the man, showing it drawn and sad, but as he turned it toward his companion he tried to force a cheerfulness he felt he could never know again.

"Tom!"

A warm, strong hand closed over her little white one, and she gained courage to continue.

"Tom, dear, I did not love him, you know, but what I thought he was."

"I am sure of that," and the man's mouth closed with a snap.

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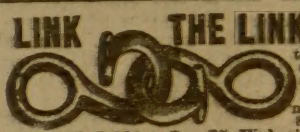

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Instruments, Drums, Uniforms. Lyon & Healy "Own-Make" Instruments are preferred by Thomas Orchestra, Banda Rossa, Mascagni, etc. Lowest prices. Big Catalog; 1600 illustrations; *e-mailed free*; it gives instructions for amateur bands.
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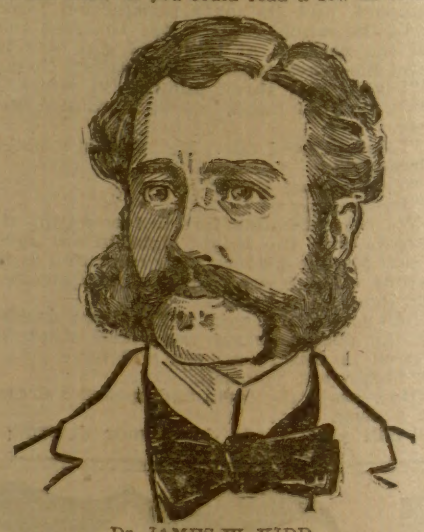
Are you sick? Do you want to get well? If so, this offer is of vital importance to you. I can show you the way to get well. It is the way I have proven successful in thousands of cases. I have on file letters from seventy thousand satisfied and grateful patients who have proven the value of my treatment by actual trial. If you could read a few of these



Dr. JAMES W. KIDD.

letters telling of miraculous cures after years of suffering I would need no further argument to convince you of my ability. I have passed the experimental stage. I know what I can do. No matter what your disease. I have cured many cases of Consumption, Bright's Disease, Locomotor Ataxia, and Partial Paralysis, that other doctors pronounced incurable. No matter how many doctors or patent medicines you have tried. The majority of my patients had tried all these in vain before they came to me. **I can cure you.** This is a strong statement, but I am willing to show my faith in my own ability.

I will send you a free treatment. You can be the judge. If you are satisfied recommend me to your friends. I feel sure of my pay because I know what my treatment will do.

I have no specialty. I treat all diseases. Do not hesitate to write because some one has told you that your disease is incurable. Every organ of the body is a perfect machine and will work perfectly if it is supplied with the proper force from the nerves, and sufficient nourishment from the blood. I have learned how to supply this nerve force and blood nourishment. This is why I can cure when others fail.

I have associated with me the most eminent specialists in America. Tell us all about your case. No matter what your ailment, your correspondence will be considered entirely confidential. We will make a careful examination of your case. The free treatment will be prepared and sent you by mail postage paid. It only costs you a stamp. I can use no stronger argument to convince you of my ability to cure you than this. You have everything to gain, nothing to lose. Write today. Address my private office as follows, **Dr. JAMES W. KIDD,** 128 Baltes Block, Fort Wayne, Ind.

"The man I loved, Tom, was the one who wanted to make me his wife—who seemed to consider me too sacred and precious for this earth; whose every look, touch, kiss"—the sweet voice was very low—"was as reverent as that of a Roman Catholic approaching the shrine of the Madonna. I can have no feeling other than disgust and loathing for the wretch who writes this letter," tearing a paper from her dress and opening it, reading:

"'My Dearest Little Clover Bloom:—I never had a harder task, but I can only hope that this has been a summer flirtation to you as well as to me. My only excuse is that you were so sweet I could not resist your charms. I know it will not be necessary to appeal to your generosity not to pursue me. The address I gave you is false, but of course you could discover me if you so desired. However, as I passed a most charming month in your society, and as I gave you no ring, I trust you will permit me to send you this which I herewith enclose. If I went too far in my idle protestations of love, forgive me, but you know few men mean all they say.

"Yours with much gratitude"—and here she paused.

"Clover, dear Clover, please let me read that name. I will hunt for that man if I have to search the world over."

"What would you do if you found him, Tom?" The sweet voice is very low, but the glorious head is held erect.

"Shoot him down like a dog," was the answer, cold and distinct.

"And rob me of the only friend I have now, Tom, dear Tom, since uncle died?" and the sweet voice is raised entreatingly to his.

"Yes, poor doctor!" he said with a sigh. "To think that a man who spent his life in doing good, should have been cheated at last and die of apoplexy because his bank failed, when I was coming home with all the money either of you could ever need."

"Tom, few things go quite the way we wish them in this world. Still, I have something to tell you. As I say, it was an ideal man who loved me for what I was, and reverenced my womanhood, to whom I gave my love. Tom!"

"Well, darling?"

"I have been thinking and thinking. If I gave my love once to an ideal, why has any of it changed? Is it not possible for me to still love my ideal, and yet make of some other man that ideal?" Never had she looked so bewilderingly sweet and fascinating as she extended her little hands and looked at him with an expression he could not misunderstand.

"Clover, Clover, you mean"— Tom cried, his heart leaping like some wild thing in leash.

"Just this, dear," taking one of the strong hands in both of hers. "I have not been blind all these months when you have treated the poor, hopeless girl like some precious treasure. Tom, I have not loved as I have without being able to detect it in others. No, dear, as soon as I began to regain my normal condition, I knew that in you I had not only a brother, but something dearer. Do not think I am bold or unwomanly, but listen, my own dear boy. I am going to put all of that past away. We are both lonely, I love you very dearly, and I know you love me. So, Tom, if you will take me, I want to be your wife."

Tom rose, pushing back his chair, and began walking back and forth, a strong emotion working in his face.

"Tom, dear, there is something more. I must tell you, for there is no one else to whom I can appeal. If I keep on this way, letting this horrible humiliation eat into my heart, I think I will never be worth anything. Give me the love, dear, dear Tom, I know is mine. Tom, Tom, let me have the right to love you, and, Tom, even if I cannot feel toward you like I did toward my ideal, there may come a time—forgive me if it is wrong to say it!—when still stronger ties will bind me to you. Six months ago you saved me from death, Tom, now save me from a broken life, my Tom, come, tell me you love me and will marry me," and she rose and advanced toward him, her arms outstretched, so sweet and tender an expression on her face, that it seemed as though some being of a heavenly order were in the room.

Tom stood like one transfixed, his own arms reaching out for her, then they dropped to his sides.

"Go sit in your chair, Clover," he said slowly, "and we will talk this over."

Wonderingly she did so, and he, turning his chair, stood leaning over its back, looking down at her.

"You have read a secret I had hoped to keep from you," Tom began in a very low voice, "but as you have done so, I do not deny it. I came home, my heart filled with love of you, and was certain you would be my wife."

"Poor, dear Tom," she said gently.

"Clover, I carried in my heart a picture of a lovely, oval-faced girl, happy, fancy free, to whom I would come the first one to speak a word of love, the first one to touch her lips as a lover."

"Tom, Tom, Tom!" the beautiful lips wailed.

"Clover, I found a heart-broken woman, who needed all my pity and brotherly love. My child, you cannot understand a nature like mine. You know I never had any one of my own, my own flesh and blood, to love, and so I have always felt that my wife must be all my own—all, all! I can be your brother, your friend, who would do anything on earth to make you the least bit happy, but I dare not marry you because of this other one."

"Oh, Tom, I will grow to love, to adore you, dear!" Clover pleaded.

"Clover, I want such a love right off. I could not stand the very thought of some one else having caressed you. He did, did he not?"

The lovely head dropped.

"But, Tom, I thought I was to have married him. I do not think I did anything that even you could find fault with. Lovers always kiss each other, do they not?"

She looked so sweet and innocent, sitting there, that he scarcely knew what he was doing or saying.

"Yes, yes, dear, I am not blaming you, only railing at fate. You spoke, darling," lowering his voice, "of still nearer ties. My darling, my darling! Clover, Clover, cannot you understand my whole nature cries out for you? But I must judge whether it would be best, not for me, but for you, and a good deal because of my nature. If I should make you my wife and then find that I had but bound you down to eternal misery, I think I should kill myself."

The honest young face looked into her eyes so earnestly that she would have been frightened had it been any one but dear old Tom.

"Clover, I used to sit and think of our future home when you would be my wife, and dreamed of you sitting by me with a little one in your arms. That picture has come before my eyes more than once when I was sadly tempted in a way you could not understand, and saved me, Clover, saved me. I wanted that little one to come into the world from a father whose past record had nothing in it which could work any harm. In the midst of all this horrible temptation of all kinds, unendurable heat and many discouragements, I worked and loved. Clover, my child-love, why is it I did not speak to you before I left home, for I think you would have been spared much misery."

"And you, too, dear Tom. Listen, dear. I think I understand. Still, perhaps I was mistaken. I do love you very dearly, and it may be that my feeling for the other was just a romantic foolishness. I want to be your wife, dear, the wife of a good man, and one who loves me so dearly. Come, Tom, take me in your arms, kiss me and say that you will not utterly refuse. I want your love, dear," and again she held out her arms, smiling tenderly.

Tom paused for a minute, then, springing forward, caught her in his arms, and bending over her face, looked straight into her eyes.

For all her bravery, he saw the slight shrinking, but, not heeding it, pressed his lips to hers in a wild, mad kiss. He felt the soft, moist flesh contract, the gentle arms instinctively strive to push him away, and read his answer in the droop of the graceful figure.

Gently as a mother, he took the little hands in his and said in his natural voice:

"See, dear, you are too worn and nervous for any new love. I am still your brother, and would rather remain so, for I know that I am first, last and always in that capacity. Still, dear, if at any time, after you have had a little more opportunity to think this thing over, you want to be my wife, why, you know, dear, you own every inch of Tom Litchfield, and your slightest word is law."

Clover stood, with drooping head, as she said, softly:

"You are right, dear," it is almost too soon and you must forgive me. You see, I am not used to my Tom other than as my brother."

"And Tom, your brother, is here all the time," he said with a cheerfulness he did not feel, as he tenderly kissed her cheek, and then, opening the curtains, let in the sunshine of a new day.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Love is ever busy, with his shuttle
Is ever weaving."

About 3 o'clock of the day he saw dawn in Clover's drawing-room, Thomas Litchfield made his way to the address given him by the boy he had rescued at the gambling house the night before. His face was very pale, and his mind still dwelt upon Clover's words.

"Poor little thing!" he thought tenderly. "How cruelly rough I did have to appear to make her see that she had no love to give me! Like so many things in this world, the love of that noble woman has been wasted. Well, Tom, old boy, brace up and take your medicine. At least, the woman you love has not cruelly jilted you. You can think of her with all tenderness and reverence. Still, no matter what happens, I think, old man, the picture you carried in your heart for so long will keep you pretty straight, that and the one of a true, generous woman trying to recompense for an unwitting wrong. Dear, dear girl!" And so musing he reached the flat building in which he expected to find the mother who had been robbed.

Looking at the names upon the bell, he soon discovered the one given—Bathurst—and, pressing the bell, heard the boy's voice asking for his name.

"Litchfield," was the prompt answer, and he heard the glad cry of surprise with which it was greeted before the young fellow responded:

"Oh, do come up, Mr. Litchfield!"

Mounting the two flights of stairs, he was received at the door by the boy, who looked still younger in the bright light shed down upon him from the ground glass skylight set in the hall.

"Mr. Litchfield, this is awfully kind," he cried, boyishly, clinging to the hand held out to him. "Mamma could not rest, for I told her I would say nothing until you came. Mamma," calling back into the room, "this is Mr. Litchfield," and then Tom felt himself pulled into the room. At that moment, while the bright sunlight from the passage shone upon him, the woman entering saw the strong figure and face in high relief, and uttered a scream as she did so.

In astonishment Tom advanced to aid her, for she seemed barely able to stand, when she put out her hands, crying:

"No, no, keep away! Do the dead live?"

"Mamma, it's Mr. Litchfield, the gentleman who dragged me away from that gambling table!" the boy cried, but his mother continued to stare at the young man's face and mutter to herself.

"Your mother appears ill," Tom finally said, addressing the boy; "so perhaps I had better come again," but she gasped:

"No, no, sit down for a few moments," and when he had complied she took a seat and for a few minutes struggled with herself.

Finally she raised her eyes and looked long and earnestly at the young man, who, while waiting for her to again address him, had fallen to thinking of his own affairs, and of Clover's words, and wondering if it would be possible for them to wipe out her brief love experience. Sitting there, with the light shining strong on his face, she appeared to find him very interesting, but at last she said, in a trembling voice:

"My boy Paul tells me that I have to thank you for saving him."

Rousing himself, Tom said quietly:

"Nothing more than any man would have done under the circumstances. I saw he was too young to be in such a place; that he was using money not belonging to him, so I picked him up and carried him off. As I did not do so until the money was all lost, I trust, Madam, you will permit me to restore it. I could have saved the money had I not believed a good lesson might be taught by its loss."

The mother again looked at him, then, turning to her son, said quietly:

"I want you to listen to what I am going to say. It is but just that I humiliate myself before my own child. That money could never have brought luck to any one. Replace, it—never! Thank a gracious God that it has been lost—I hope forever, for that was blood money."

Both her hearers started, and she continued:

"Yes, blood money. Will you tell me your name?"

Tom replied by handing her his card. Taking the neat piece of pasteboard, she read the name "Thomas Litchfield."

"May I ask you where you received that name, and if you were born to it?"

Great waves of blood surged into Tom's face, for he was very sensitive about his birth.

"Pray do not misunderstand me, for I have a reason for asking."

"I was born to no name that I know of. This was given to me by the man who brought me up as his own son, it being the name of his dearest friend who had died," Tom said in a low tone.

"The name of your foster-father—the name!" cried the woman feverishly.

"Dr. Arden," was Tom's quick answer, then he sprang forward to catch her fainting form in his arms.

Two hours later he left the flat building with another burden upon his faithful shoulders, another sting in his noble heart.

This charming story of pain and passion will be continued in next week's Ledger, leading the reader to some highly interesting situations. The patterns and cameras advertised on pages thirteen and fifteen are still being forwarded free of charge to all Ledger subscribers.

The Idealists.

She—Oh, Rippin'! Your work has not been so good of late, but these pigs are quite like your old self!

She Got Even.

"When he wrote, demanding all his presents back, what did she do?"

"She sent them back with a letter asking why he had omitted sending her the bill for the parties, dinners and theaters he had taken her to."

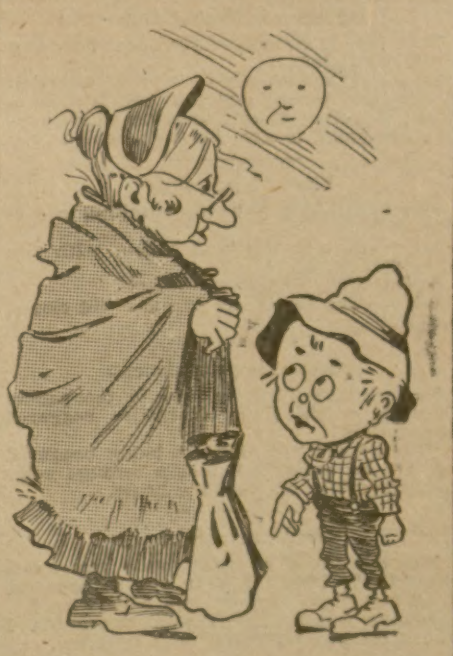
"Well, I guess that held him for awhile."

"No; he made out the bill and sent it in."

"Then I guess that held her for awhile?"

"No; she wrote back that she never intended paying the bill, but that she merely wanted it as Exhibit A in a 'Meanest Man That Ever Lived' contest."

Proof Positive.



The Boy—Say, lady, I heard dat you found a pocketbook wid $5 in it. Well, it's mine. I lost it.

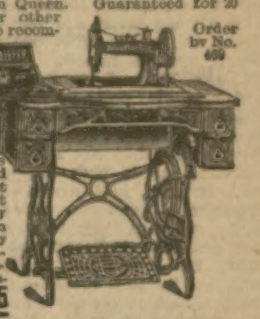
The Lady—What proof have you that you lost it?

The Boy—De hole in my pocket.

Co-Operative Prices

are the lowest prices known and are not created by a sacrifice of quality as are the usual "low prices" but entirely by a saving of expense. The goods handled by a co-operative store are known the world over for their high standard of quality, because the share-holders of a co-operative store are also its best customers, and therefore, there can be no object in adulterating, substituting, cheapening or otherwise lowering quality. By dealing with a truly co-operative society you are not alone assured of a large saving of money but a positive and absolute guarantee that the saving is not off-set by a corresponding decrease of grade or quality.

ARLINGTON GEM five-drawer drop head, a good family sewing machine with arm slightly lower than our higher priced machines, mounted on plain stand without ball bearings. Woodwork, good quality oak with pretty pressed design. Full and complete set of attachments same as furnished with Arlington Queen. Guaranteed for 20 years same as all our other machines, although we recommend the purchase of anyone of the machines having the ball bearing stand, better quality wood work and modern improvements. This is not a high grade machine, and offered only to those who put price above quality but is in all respects worthy of being included in our line of strictly reliable goods. **Our Co-Operative Price**, complete with all accessories and high grade attachments **$11.25** Order by No. 409



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WE GUARANTEE 7% ON YOUR INVESTMENT.

ARLINGTON AUTOMATIC LIFT AND DROP CABINET **"Our Prize Beauty"** Highest grade, highest arm, same as No. 6D22 illustrated above *which please refer to* with the *additional* feature of our own patented Automatic Lift and Drop Mechanism by which machines opens and closes automatically. A Marvelous Value. Combines the very perfection of mechanical construction with the most superb outward appearance and greatest convenience and elegance. **Our Co-Operative Price**, complete with all accessories and highest grade attachments made **$19.75** Order by No. 20

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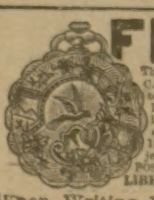

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BAD HABITS.

Improper Food Often Leads to Tobacco and Drink.

Improper food creates abnormal tastes and there are many cases on the medical records where the liquor habit and tobacco habit have been caused by wrong food and have easily been cured by Grape-Nuts which so thoroughly nourishes and rebuilds the nerves that they stop the cry for stimulants.

A business man says, "For 30 years I smoked on an average of 10 or 15 cigars a day and then my nervous system collapsed and I had about made up my mind that it was all up with me for I had tried many times to break off from the tobacco habit but it always failed.

"Last May I was so run down I only weighed 111 pounds and I realized that I must stop smoking and stuck to it for about 10 days but was so nervous and out of sorts my family told me I had better go back to smoking as it was impossible to live with me. It was just about this time my wife brought a package of Grape-Nuts on the table one morning and as I could eat nothing else she induced me to try a little of that. So I took a teaspoonful of it and strange to say it tasted good and by the time I had it down I knew it had gone to the right spot so I took some more and it was the first food I had relished for weeks.

"So I kept up the use of Grape-Nuts and as my appetite came back added other foods and I am now back to my old weight of 138 pounds never felt better in my life and strange as it may seem I have no further craving for the tobacco and I thoroughly believe that only the courage and ambition I got out of the food Grape-Nuts has given me the strength to quit smoking. If everyone knew the power of this wonderful food you would not be able to build a factory big enough to supply it." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

There's a reason.

Look in each package for a copy of the famous little book, "The Road to Wellville."

An Ideal Country Editor.

First Wayback Citizen—Heard the news?

Second Wayback Citizen—Eh? More burglaries?

First Wayback Citizen—Mighty near it. As th' new editor of th' Wayback Whoop was goin' home last night, he saw two burglars in Ike Weightlight's store. Well, sir, that editor just pitched in, shot one of 'em ,an' caught the other.

Second Wayback Citizen—That so? Well, I'm glad we've got an editor at last what makes himself useful to the public, instead of sittin' around doing nothin' but writin'.

Strikers Find Friends.

Merchant—I am collecting money to help the bituminous coal miners continue their strike.

Broker—Eh? You?

Merchant—Yes; if they hold out the stock of soft coal will soon be used up and our atmosphere will once more be fit to breathe.

Broker—Glorious! Here's my check.

No Novelty.

Wiggle—I see the discovery of birds that cannot fly has been made in Ecuador.

Waggle—Why, we've got 'em right here in Yonkers.

Wiggle—You don't tell me? What do you call them?

Waggle—Jail birds.

Vindictive.

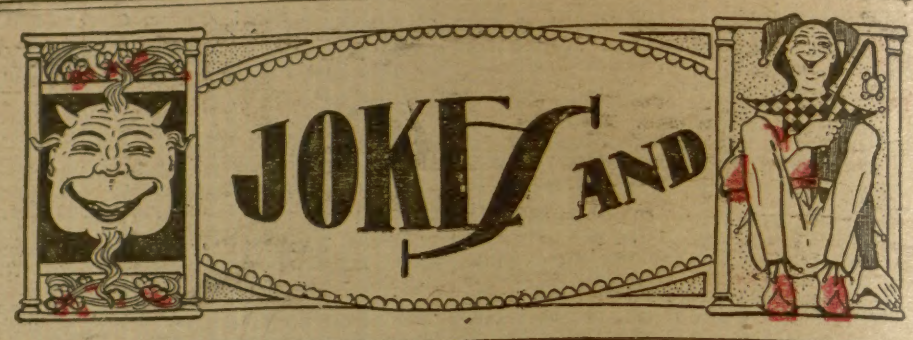
Editor—Here is a scientific item which says that photographs have been taken five hundred feet under the water. Print it in a conspicuous place.

Sub-Editor—Um—what's the idea?

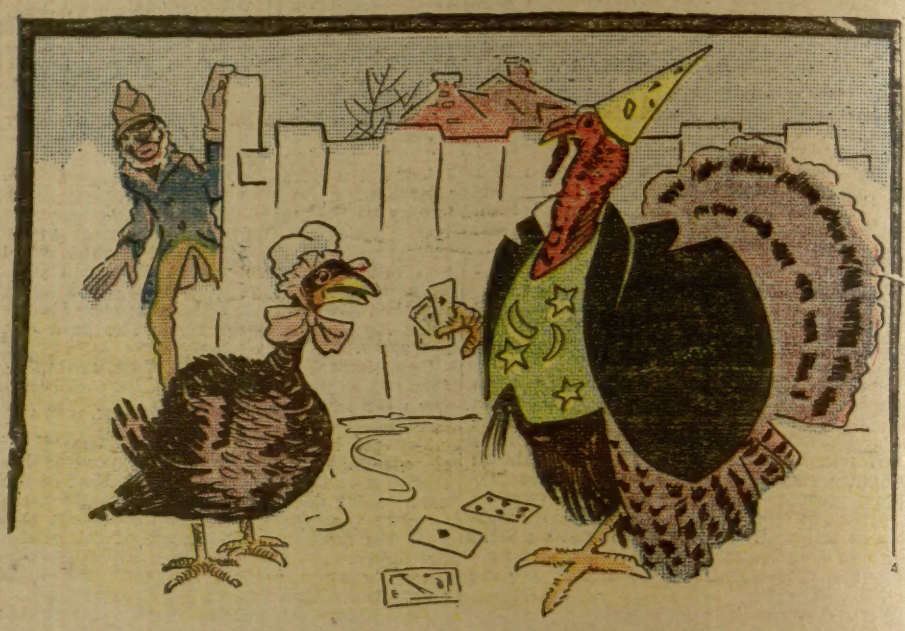
Editor—I am in hopes some of these camera fiends will try it.

Information for Kentuckians.

Pretty soon they'll have to paint signs on the trains passing through the Kentucky feud sections: "Don't shoot at this train. Couple of funerals on it already."



AN EVIL FORTUNE.



Turkey Fortune-Teller—Beware of a tall, dark man. He is even now seeking to get you within his grasp. Should he succeed in his designs, the cards predict death for you.

Clergyman—Well, I see you have your Thanksgiving dinner?
Wandering Willie—No, it's the other feller's.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE HEALING.

ONE MILLION CURED CASES.

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Over a million cases of disease in every form are now to the credit of Christian Science Healing. Most of these were cases that the doctors had given up as "incurable." Many more were chronic maladies that had baffled their skill for years. All were quickly cured; some were cured instantly. The evidence on these facts is simply indisputable and the curing still goes on. There can be no mistake or misstatement about it. The healers and their work are in public view. As a C. S. healer my many marvelous cures have startled the world. During the past 12 years I have healed diseases of almost every known kind and in every stage of severity. They included many surgical cases where operations were otherwise threatened. I cured cases that were far away from me, as well as those near at hand. And I tell you in like manner that wherever you may dwell, whether one or many physicians have failed to give you relief, if you report the case to me and so desire, you shall be cured. This is no vain or idle promise. My past success fully justifies it. You can be cured whether you believe in Christian Science or not. You can be cured whether in this city or thousands of miles away from me. In our Christian Science Healing distance is of no account; disbelief is not any hindrance; disappointments of the past only make stronger grounds for hope. All you really need is the wish to be healed.

I have just published a little book in regard to this blessed truth called "A Message of Health and Healing." If you write to me I will gladly send you a copy free. It gives many interesting facts and convincing testimonials. Enclose 2-cent stamp for postage. S. A. Jefferson, C. S. B., Suite 604, 112 Dearborn street, Chicago, Ill.

Tables Turned.

"They say the bad men around here run every show out of town?" interrogated the advance agent, cautiously.

"Not always, pard," replied Amber Pete. "The principal characters in the last show run all the bad men out of town."

"You don't mean it?"

"Yes; the show was 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' and the principal characters bloodhounds."

Bridget's Objection.

Bridget—Oi'll hov to l'ave, mum. Oi don't loike that snip of a dude that does be callin' on Miss Ethel.

Mistress—The idea! He doesn't call to see you——

Bridget—I know he don't, mum; but Oi'm afraid some of the neighbors moight think he does.

Driving Them Away.

"Why is it that all the men who used to be crazy over Miss Brightly do not go near her now?"

"Some enemy spread a report."

"Said there was a 'skeleton in the family closet?' "

"No; said she was a bachelor girl."

A Profitable Business.

Smythe—Krammer has not only made himself a fortune in the quick-lunch business, but he has helped others to amass considerable sums.

Browne—Who are they?

Smythe—The doctors and the undertakers.

A Tough Hat.

Upgardson—A Panama hat is expensive, of course, but it will last forever. The longer you wear them the tougher they get. This one of mine is in its third year.

Atom—Yes; I've been noticing it. I think it's the toughest hat I ever saw.

Order a Free Bottle

Of Drake's Palmetto Wine. It gives vigor and energy to the whole body, soothes, heals and invigorates stomachs that are weakened by injurious living or when the mucous lining of the stomach is impaired by hurtful medicines or food. Drake's Palmetto Wine will clear the liver and kidneys from congestion, cause them to perform their necessary work thoroughly and insure their healthy condition. Drake's Palmetto Wine cures every form of stomach distress, such as indigestion, distress after eating, shortness of breath and heart trouble caused by indigestion. Drake's Palmetto Wine cures you permanently of that bad taste in mouth, offensive breath, loss of appetite, heartburn, inflamed, catarrhal or ulcerated stomach and constipated or flatulent bowels. The Drake Formula Company, Drake Building, Chicago, Ill., proves all this to you by sending you free and prepaid a trial bottle of Drake's Palmetto Wine to test it. This wonderful Palmetto Medicine is purely vegetable and the greatest remedy ever offered to Chronic Sufferers. Write today for a free bottle. A letter or postal card is your only expense.

Not Patented.

Citiman—Are you still troubled with your neighbor's chickens?

Suburb—Not at all. They are kept shut up now.

Citiman—How did you manage?

Suburb—Every night I hid a lot of eggs in the grass, and every morning, when my neighbor was looking, I went out and brought them in.

Difference In Method, But—

Traveler (in Europe)—What are those two beautiful girls?

Steamer Captain—One is a Circassian whose parents are going to sell her to a Turk; the other is an American whose parents are going to give her to a nobleman.

Liked Church, But—

Sweet Girl—Do you enjoy taking me to church?

Lover—Not so much as riding with you in a street car.

Sweet Girl—Goodness! Why?

Lover—The sexton never yells "Sit closer, please."

General Impoverishment.

The next morning he read in the papers that his wife's fete champetre beggared description.

"Then I am not alone in being beggared by it!" he exclaimed, and a strange comfort crept into his desolate heart.

An Unheard Prayer.

Mamma—Johnny, what made you pinch the baby? Didn't I hear you asking the Lord last night to make you a good boy?

Johnny (aged five)—Yes, mamma; but I guess He was busy and din't hear me.

A New Annunciator.

Guest (in cheap lodging house—Say, there ain't no bell in my room.

Clerk—Dat'll be all right, mister. If youse want anyt'ing wring de towel. See?

"I won dis yere turkey at a raffle."
"I suppose yo' drew de fust number?"
"No, sah! I drew de fust razah."

Not a Joke.

Giles—Take two letters from "money" and one is left.

Miles—Is that a joke?

"Yes, verily."

"Well, I know of a fellow who took money from two letters."

"That's a good joke."

"Not it; he got twelve months."

A Regular Toper.

"In his letter of application he claimed to be a man of regular habits."

"Well?"

"Well, the very first time I saw him he was drunk."

"Well, you never saw him sober, did you?"

An Ideal Birthday.

The Aunt—And how was your birthday party, Archie?

Archie—Oh, Auntie, it was the finest I ever had! Why, I got such a terrible stomach trouble that I could not go to school for three days.

At the Mountain House.

Ida—Jack and the young widow went up the stream trout fishing this morning.

May—Yes; and Jack forgot to take along his fly.

Ida—Oh, that doesn't matter. I heard the boys say the young widow is fly herself.

Another Deadhead.

Rodrick—The Count says he can't tell what is the matter with his stomach.

Van Albert—Is he living on anything rich?

Rodrich—I should say so. He is living on his wife's father.

The Ruling Power.

The Peddler—I want to see the mistress of the house.

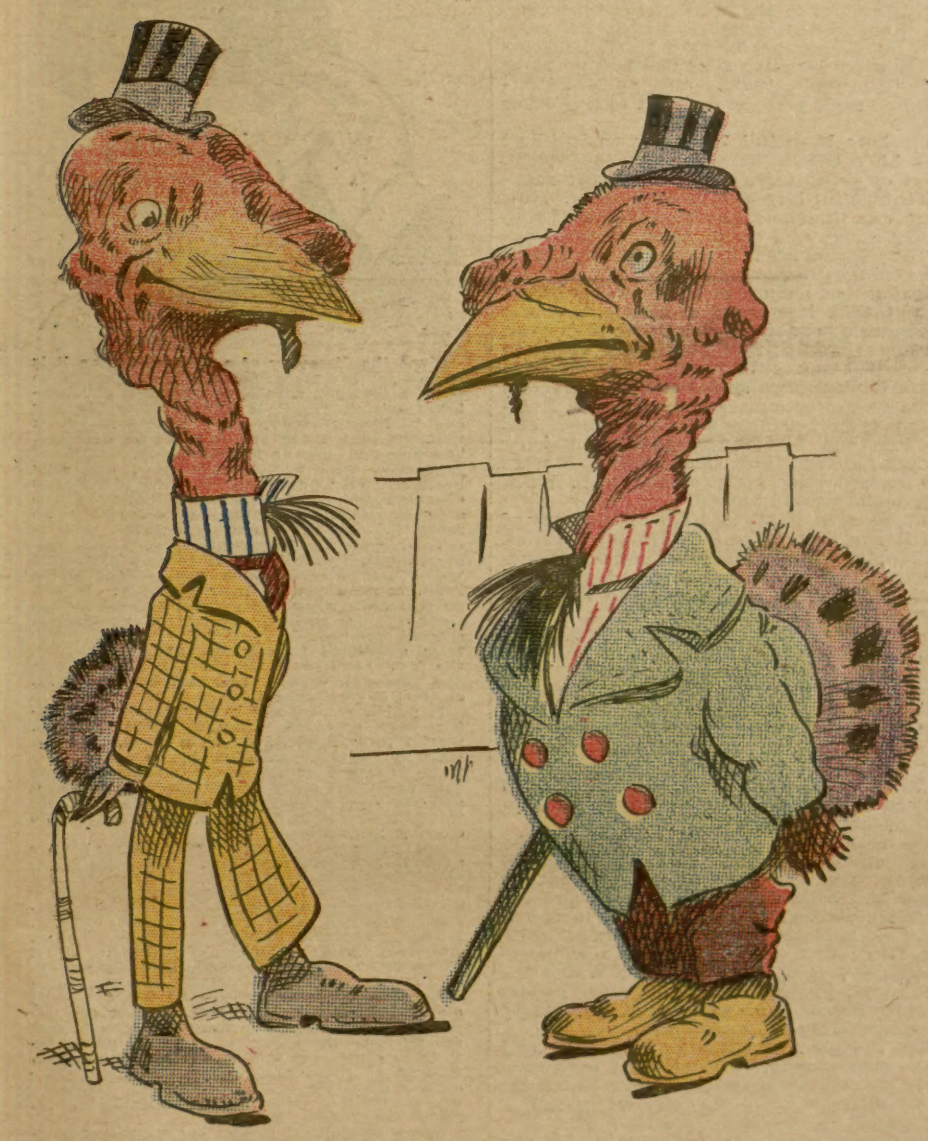
The Master—Do you? Then step around to the kitchen door and ask for the cook.

Suggestive.

Knicker—Was it an up-to-date wedding?

Knocker—Yes, indeed; they threw breakfast food instead of rice.

A TIMELY FAD FOR TURKEYS.



"Hello, old man! What's the matter? Not well? You seem to be losing flesh."

"Bet your life! I'm living on that new three cent a day diet. Thanksgiving's coming!"

Practical Example.

"Dear," said the stylish little woman, "I had my shoes heeled this morning."

"What did they cost?" queried her husband.

"Two dollars."

"Whew! Now I know what they mean by high French heels."

A Considerate Employer.

Publisher—You walk lame. Been kicked out much?

Book Agent—'Bout forty times.

Publisher (kindly)—Well, leave your sample cyclopedia here, and canvass with this sample Bible until your back gets well.

The Same Old Story.

Marie—I hear you are going to be married again.

Edith—Again? Why, I've never been married yet.

Marie—No; but I can't recall the number of times you were "going to be."

Not the One He Meant.

Bugby—Who was that lady who sat beside you at the theater the other evening?

Smith—Why, that was my wife.

Bugby—Oh, I don't mean the one who sat on your right. I mean the one you talked with.

Remarkable Honesty.

"You say his honesty surprised you?"

"Yes," answered Senator Sorghum. "When I overbid the opposition for his vote, he went to the trouble of giving the other fellow his money back."

A Strong Habit.

Cumon—Did your friend Tanker succeed in breaking his terrible drink habit?

Bangs—No; the habit succeeded in breaking him.

Suitably Named.

Mrs. Kidlet—John, why do you always call our boy "Coffee?"

Mr. Kidlet—'Cause he keeps us awake nights.

Only a Fright

Andrew Carnegie, at the opening of the autumn conference of the Iron and Steel Institute at Barrow-in-Furness, England, told an odd little story from his vast collection of Scottish anecdotes.

"A Scot," he said, "was unhappy because he had lost his money. He borrowed a loaded gun, and with a desperate look started toward a dismal fen. The owner of the gun, a little anxious, bawled after him to know if he was going to commit suicide. He bawled back:

"'No just that. I'm only thinkin' o' gangin' doun to the fens to gie mysel' a confoonded fricht.'"

Feminine Way.

Singleton—Your wife looks worried, old man. What's the trouble?

Wederly—Oh, she was worried about something or other last night and this morning she can't remember what it was. That's what is worrying her now.

Got Even With a Rival.

Frank—I've got even with Jim at last, Ned—How did you do it?

Frank—I gave his girl a pair of pretty vases and he will go broke keeping them filled with flowers.

Near Neighbors.

Sympathetic Parson (to prisoner)—Ah, my unfortunate man, what would your poor, old father think of your conduct?

Prisoner—Ask him; he lodges in the next cell to the right of mine.

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Why pay for a Talking Machine when you can get one for selling only 20 of our new fastest selling **Fancy Articles?** They sell quickly, having **genuine value and merit.** Send name and address, we will mail you postpaid and **Trust You** with 20 of our Specialties. Sell them at 10 cts. each. When sold, send us the $2.00 and we will forward a **Talking Machine 20 Inches long. Uses either Columbia or Victor Disc Records.** We will **forfeit $100** to anyone who remits $2.00 and can prove we do not send a **Talking Machine** complete with 25 points, including a **Comic Song.** It reproduces songs, speeches, band music, etc., and can be used at all entertainments and concerts, in any size hall or room. It has piano finished base, with concert sound box and 14-inch metal Amplifying Horn. This machine is **open for inspection at our offices.** Send your order at once to **SAFE JEWELRY CO., 19 Warren St., New York.**

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WANTED Reliable men in every locality to introduce our goods, tacking up show cards on trees, along roads, and conspicuous places, also distributing small advertising matter. Commission or salary $60.00 per month and expenses not over $2.50 per day. Steady employment to good men. No experience needed. Write for particulars. **EMPIRE MEDICINE COMPANY, Buffalo, N. Y.**

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$3 a Day Sure Send us your address and we will show you how to make $3 a day absolutely sure; we furnish the work and teach you free, you work in the locality where you live. Send us your address and we will explain the business fully, remember we guarantee a clear profit of $3 for every day's work, absolutely sure. Write at once. ROYAL MANUFACTURING CO., Box 1101, Detroit, Mich.

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AGENTS WANTED.

Either Sex. No canvassing. No soliciting. No time from your regular occupation. No one will know you are my representative. No capital, outfit or experience needed. Easy, permanent, honorable and profitable work that can be done at home. Address J. W. KIDD, Key 7002 Ft. Wayne, Ind

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One reliable man or woman in each county as manager, to exhibit, take orders and appoint agents for Harrison's Oil-Gas Stoves for cooking and heating. Wonderful invention. Automatically generates fuel gas from kerosene oil. Miniature Gas Works. Absolutely safe. Enormous demand. Thousands sold weekly. Cheapest, cleanest, safest fuel. Customers delighted. Catalogue **FREE.** Write today.

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Free Gold Watch

This fully warranted **Solid Gold Plated Watch,** equal in appearance to a **$35.00 Gold Filled Watch** warranted 20 years, is given **FREE** to Boys and Girls or anyone for selling 20 pieces of our handsome jewelry at 10c. each. Send your address and we will send the jewelry postpaid, when sold send us the $2 and we will positively send you the watch, also a chain for quick work. Write to-day.

BOND JEWELRY CO., DEPT. 24, CHICAGO.

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6$ A DAY FOR YOU and pleasant employment at spare time selling **PROF. LONG'S MAGNETIC COMB** Everybody buys on sight; 32 kinds to select from; beautiful; **unbreakable.** New discovery, fully guaranteed to remove dandruff, stop hair from falling out, cures headaches, and makes fluffy, curly hair; 50c sample mailed for 25c. Exclusive territory given men or women. Experience unnecessary. Free information. **PROF. LONG, 56 Ash Street, Pekin, Ill.**

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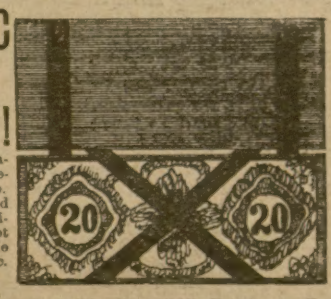
MAGIC BILL BOOK!



An entertaining and useful article. Can be used as any ordinary pocket book. Sample by mail 15c. **AGENTS WANTED.**

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This watch has American movement fully warranted to keep correct time. The case is **Solid Gold Plated,** equal in appearance to a **Gold Filled Watch** warranted 20 years. We give it **FREE** to Boys and Girls or anyone for selling 20 pieces of our handsome jewelry at 10c each. Send your address and we will send the jewelry postpaid, when sold send us the $2 and we will positively send you the watch and chain.

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It separates the white of the egg from the yolk without breaking the yolk. Necessary in all cooking where eggs are used. **No kitchen complete without one.** Price only 10c. for sample.

Agents Wanted. | W. C. WATKINS, Box 1505, - Pittsburgh, Pa.

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For selling 10 one-pound cans **QUEEN BAKING POWDER,** and to each purchaser of a can, we give **FREE A PITCHER AND SIX GLASSES,** latest cut glass pattern. (These Dinner Sets are high grade, are handsomely decorated in flowers of 4 colors, and each piece heavily traced with gold.) We also give **50, 62 and 112 Piece Dinner Sets, Skirts, Waists, Jackets, Furniture, Sewing Machines,** and many other valuable Premiums for selling our groceries. We also give cash commission. Write today for Illustrated Plans offering everything in glassware, graniteware, etc. to customers; it will pay you. No money required. **You risk absolutely nothing,** as we send you the goods and premiums you select, pay freight and allow you time to deliver the goods and collect for them before paying us. **AMERICAN SUPPLY CO., 900-6 N. SECOND ST. Dept. 127 ST. LOUIS, MO.**

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LIFETIME OF MAN.

Undoubtedly the secret to prolong life is not to abridge it by any voluntary act of our own, for while there is nothing which men prize more highly, there is yet nothing of which they are so universally careless. Without subscribing to the fatalism of the Turks, yet every Christian feels that the thread of our lives is in the hand of One who clearly sees the end from the beginning. It is not the reasonable enjoyment of life which curtails its limit, it is not the pure draughts of its wine, but draining it to the dregs, which is fatal.

So fleeting is life that while we are discussing its characteristics, it is gone; it is only a shadow, as it were, when compared to the idea of eternity, and yet we live in our greatness and our grossness "a little lower than the angels, a little higher than the brutes." There is one thing in which we may justly be avaricious, and that is time. Man should part with no moment without receiving for it a full equivalent. Part with your hours less willingly than with your gold. Remember the advertisement of a certain moralist: "Lost, yesterday, two golden hours, each set with sixty diamond minutes. No reward is offered, for they are gone forever."

We have headed our sketch "Lifetime of Man," and were thinking as we sat down to write, of life and its duration, of the briefness of its span, that while we cannot create a single moment, yet how often we waste years. Then occurred to us the Scriptural limit as ascribing to man "threescore years and ten," and as we mused, memory recalled the half-forgotten German fable relating to the lifetime of man.

When the world was created, according to this authority, and all creatures assembled to have their lifetime apportioned, the ass first advanced and asked how long he would have to live.

"Thirty years," replied Nature.

"Thirty years?" repeated the ass.

"Ay. Will that be agreeable to thee?" inquired Nature, blandly.

"Alas!" answered the ass, "it is a long while."

"Is it too long?"

"Ah, yes; remember," said the ass, "what a wearisome existence will be mine. From morning until night I shall have to bear heavy burdens, dragging corn-sacks to mill that others may eat bread, while I shall have little refreshment save blows and kicks. Give me but a portion of that time."

"You reason truly," said Nature. "I will reduce your years to eighteen."

The ass was comforted and wagged its long ears in grateful significance. As he went away the dog came forward in his turn.

"How long dost thou require to live?" asked Nature. "Thirty years were too much for the ass, but wilt thou be contented with them?"

"Is it thy will that I should?" asked the dog, submissively.

"Well, let me first hear thee."

"Think how much I shall have to run about; my feet will not last for so long a time; and when I shall have lost my voice for barking, and my teeth for biting, what else shall I be fit for but to lie in a corner and growl?"

"Perhaps you are right; I will therefore give thee but twelve years," said Nature.

The dog wagged his tail in gratitude, and made way for the ape, who was just behind him.

"Thou wilt doubtless live willingly the thirty years," suggested Nature to the ape.

"Hardly," was the reply.

"Why, life will be pleasant to thee, with no labor to perform, like the dog and the ass."

"It may seem so to others," said the ape, "but it will not be so. Should it rain puddings, I shall have no spoon. I shall play merry tricks and amuse others, but be rewarded only with a sour apple and a box upon the ears. I shall not be able to endure thirty years."

"Are you sure?"

"Quite sure," replied the monkey, as he scratched his side vigorously.

"Well, I will give thee ten years, then," said Nature.

The grateful animal chattered his thanks at this abbreviation, and scampered away on all fours.

At last came man, healthy and strong, and asked the measure of his days.

"Will thirty years content thee?" asked Nature.

"Thirty years?"

"Aye."

"How short a time!" exclaimed man.

"Do you think so?"

"Why, yes; when I shall have built a house and kindled a fire on my own hearth, when the trees I have planted are about to bloom and bear fruit, when life will seem to me most desirable, I shall die."

"You speak well."

"I speak truly," said the man.

"What would you have?"

"Oh, Nature, grant me a longer period."

"Thou shalt have the eighteen years of the ass besides," said Nature.

"That is still too little," replied man.

"Take likewise the twelve years of the dog.

"It is not yet sufficient."

"What, more?"

"Yes; give me more."

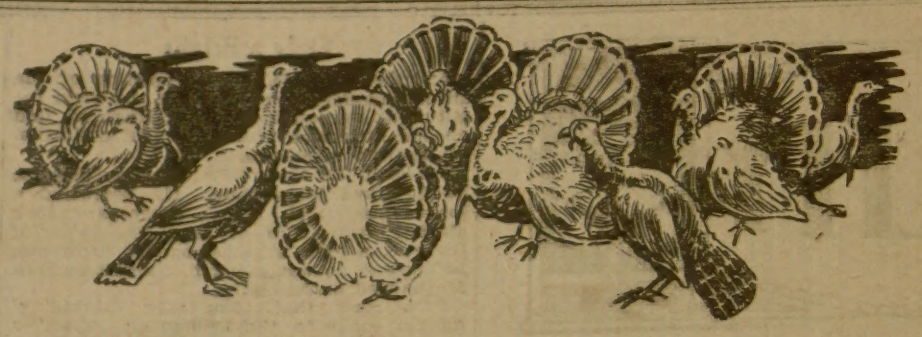
"I give thee then in addition the ten years of the ape. I can do no more."

Man departed unsatisfied with even all these concessions, though his life had been extended by the kindness of Nature to seventy years.

The first thirty are his human years, and pass swiftly by. He is then healthy and happy, laboring cheerfully and rejoicing in his existence. The eighteen years of the ass come next, and burden upon burden is heaped upon him. He carries the corn that is to feed others, blows and kicks are the wages of his service.

The twelve years of the dog follow and he loses his teeth and lies in the corner and growls. When these are gone the ape's ten years form the conclusion. The man, weak and silly, becomes the sport of children.

"We are such stuff as dreams are made of, and our little life is rounded with a sleep."



BORN IN MYSTERY;

Or, The Heiress of Claremont Hall.

By Libbie Sprague Phillips.

Begun in No. 42, Oct. 17. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

PART V.—Continued.

Her individuality and gayety seemed to pervade the house; she was always so good natured and pleasant, so ready to do kind things for every one, from soothing the old Major, when he seemed sad and out of spirits, to nursing the cook with a fever.

There was no denying her goodness of heart, and her manners were perfect. She never gave herself the airs of a beauty or seemed to expect admiration. He often watched her at the social gatherings and he had never seen her face brighten at the approach of any man, and no man seemed to pay her marked attention. Why was it? he asked himself. Was it because she was cold and distant to all save him? For the dark eyes always brightened as he drew near and gazed into his own with a look that plainly told that his presence was not distasteful to her.

As they strolled away together one day at a picnic in the old Deering woods, the eyes of Maud Atwell, one of the most spiteful of the village beauties, followed them with a dark, angry look.

"I can not understand," she said to Lottie Sherwood, "how a young lady like Ada Remington, connected with one of the best families in the country, came to form an intimate friendship with a girl like Marian—a girl who has no right to the name she bears, nor to any other name, for that matter. And her brother seems to be completely in love with her. Do you think it can be possible that they do not know who she is—that they actually believe that she is really the grandchild of old Major Claremont?"

"It may be possible that such is the case," answered Lottie; "but at any rate, I believe that their friendship is genuine. I do not believe that it will be broken when they learn, as they will some day, if they do not already know, that she is not the Major's grandchild, and that her mother's marriage was shrouded in mystery."

"Her mother's marriage! Lottie Sherwood, her mother never was married! No one ever believed such a thing—at least, no one but Agnes Claremont, and I will warrant that she has her doubts about it; if the truth were known. The Remingtons should be told who she is! Such deception is shameful!"

Miss Atwell had grown excited while talking and the last words were spoken in a tone loud enough to reach the ears of Ada Remington, who was at that moment drawing near to where they were sitting.

"I am all ready to hear the secret," she said, laughingly, as she seated herself on the mossy knoll beside them. "What is it that I should be told? Has the young lawyer who has been hovering near me all summer another sweetheart who is now preparing to strike me a deadly blow?"

"That is just it," laughed Lottie, hastily, anxious to prevent Miss Atwell from saying something that she should not. "There are a great many young ladies who are a little jealous of the attentions you have received, Ada, Miss Atwell and myself among the number."

Of course Miss Atwell was obliged to join in the laugh which followed this remark; but her laughter had in it such a ring of bitterness that Ada wondered if there was not, after all, some truth in what Lottie had said—if jealousy was not the cause of her ill humor.

"Well, I shall soon be going home," replied Ada, still laughing; "meanwhile, I shall feel safe beneath the roof of the Claremonts, for the Major is an old soldier and will understand how to protect a refugee from pursuing enemies, be they ever so many."

"The Claremont home, like the Claremont name, seems to be growing famous for protection," Miss Atwell replied, and the sneering tone in which the words were spoken, caused Ada to again regard her with a wondering look.

"What do you mean?" she asked. "I do not understand."

"I suppose not; but you would do well to find out how very much the name of Claremont is worth to one who is now masquerading in it; having done this, you will then readily understand."

And as Miss Atwell delivered this little speech she rose to her feet, and with a disdainful toss of her head, she walked rapidly away.

Ada turned to Lottie with a puzzled look on her face.

"What in the world did she mean, Lottie? Who is masquerading in the Claremont name?"

"I think Miss Atwell feels a little spiteful this afternoon," answered Lottie, evasively, yet she felt strongly inclined to tell her just what she had meant; and had she but done so, much misery might have been spared. But she shrank from telling the story herself, and after a moment's thought, she concluded that she would say nothing at present, but would speak to Agnes about it that very night, for she agreed with Miss Atwell on one point, the Remingtons should be told. Not because she, like Miss Atwell, wished to quench the light of joy from Marian's bewitching eyes, but because she felt that if Charles Remington was giving the love and admiration to Marian Claremont that he would not give to Marian obscure and unknown, then, for Marian's own happiness, the story should be made known before the child had given her heart to one who would some day fling it back to her as something worthless.

PART SIX.

A number of young people had been invited to dinner at Claremont Hall that evening, and Lottie, as she noted the way in which Charlie Remington gazed after Marian wherever she went, felt convinced that at least he was already in love with her; there was no mistaking the lovelight in those clear, earnest eyes. Would it make any difference to the proud, handsome man, she wondered—this story which he must soon be told—would he love Marian just as dearly after learning that she had no right to the Claremont name, and, as Maud Atwell had said, perhaps no right to any other name?

But how beautiful Marian was looking! Men had, before now, braved the world, dared opposing forces and done many reckless things for love of a face like hers. How great was Charlie Remington's love of self, family name, and social position, she wondered? Would he, if it were necessary, sacrifice all for the woman he loved?

Marian was looking so unspeakably happy tonight that it seemed to Lottie that she was more bewilderingly beautiful than ever. Her dress was of rich pink satin veiled in spangled black chiffon, and the style in which it was made suited the tall, graceful figure to perfection. And as Charlie Remington drew her arm within his own and led her out to dinner, many admiring glances followed them; and, alas! they were also followed by glances that were black with jealousy and hatred.

Lottie noted it all, and something seemed to tell her that there was trouble in store for Marian. She sought for Agnes immediately after dinner, determined that she would ask her at once if Marian had ever been told the story of her birth, and if Charlie and Ada knew that she was not of the Claremont family.

But she found Agnes surrounded by a group of friends with whom she appeared to be enjoying herself immensely. Poor Agnes! it was so seldom that she saw her sweet face lighted up with real pleasure that she had not the heart to disturb her now. Then somehow the evening slipped away and she found no opportunity for saying anything to her on the subject.

The next day Claremont Hall was the scene of bustle and confusion. Charlie Remington had received a telegram that his father had been taken suddenly ill and desired his immediate return. The morning, of course, was spent in packing their trunks, then there was only time for a few handclasps and a few hurried good-bys, and the two young people, who had grown so deservedly popular and who would be lovingly remembered by all, were gone.

Yes, the pleasant summer was over, and as Marian wandered alone that afternoon along the shady pathways where, already, a few autumn leaves had begun to fall, a feeling of loneliness oppressed her.

Would he ever think of her again, she wondered—this brignt, handsome Charlie Remington, to whom she had given her heart? For Marian had no doubt about her own feelings; she loved him with a love that would last through life, and through all eternity, as well.

No word of love had passed between them, but just at the last, when she hid given her hand to him in bidding him good-by, he had clasped it tenderly in both his own and said:

"I hope I am not wrong, Marian, in thinking that you will not forget me. There is joy in the thought, and some time I shall come again and——"

He paused suddenly, while he regarded her with a grave, thoughtful look; then, as Ada called to him that she was waiting, he added hurriedly, as he raised her hand to his lips: "May heaven keep you—for me!"

What had he meant? Marian knew that her eyes must have been shining with the tears which had cost her a mighty effort to keep back; had they revealed to him her heart's secret, she wondered? If so, would he cherish her love or would he, after the manner of some, when again surrounded by old friends and old associations, think of the pleasant hours which he had spent in her society as "only a flirtation," and think of her love which she had thus revealed as presumptuous folly?

But such thoughts as these were painful, and Marian resolved to put them from her. He would come again. He was honorable and sincere; he would be true. And the picture which her fancy drew of a future with him was a fair one indeed. "Ah," she thought, "when the bright side of life is so beautiful, why look at the dark side?" And presently she found herself humming a little tune, and she smiled as she thought how easy it was to banish unpleasant thoughts.

Poor Marian! A time was coming when she would not find it thus easy—a time when the brightness of life would be completely overshadowed by the darkness—aye, the darkness of blackest midnight!

The next day she went to the village to match some wools for Agnes, and she could not help noting the distant way in which the people whom she met on the street returned her pleasant greeting.

Hitherto, during the summer, having had Ada constantly with her, she had never no-

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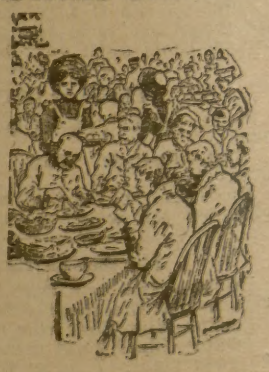

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iced that their conversation had nearly always been directed to Ada only; but now, being alone, their haughtiness and coldness could not fail to attract her notice.

"I have offended them in some way," she thought; and the poor girl racked her brain trying to remember when and how.

But as the weeks went by and the winter festivities began, a feeling of wonder crept into her heart and the dark eyes took on a saddened, pathetic look; for to the many balls and receptions that were given, only a few ventured to invite the inmates of Claremont Hall.

"She ought not to expect a place in society," she overheard some one remark one evening. "Agnes Claremont was a fool when she took her as she did, giving to her the shelter of her name as well as of her home, she might have known how it would end. She lost her lover by so doing, and now, in trying to force her into society, she will lose many of her old-time friends."

It must be herself of whom they were talking; but what did they mean? She had heard the story of Ellis Deering and of the engagement which had existed between him and Agnes, from old Dr. Deering himself, but that she had been the cause of his going away, she had never dreamed; she had never heard even a hint of such a thing before. Was it true? Could it be possible that she, who loved Agnes with the love with which she had loved her mother, had been the cause of her lonely, saddened life.

But even if this were true, why should she not expect a place in society?

She could thing of nothing that would answer this question, and as Agnes, herself, appeared to be sadly worried and perplexed of late, she shrank from asking her questions that would bring to her mind the lost joys of her youth, for she knew that she had never cared to talk of Ellis Deering. His portrait stood on the mantel in Agnes' room and she had often seen her gazing at it with a wistful, yearning look. "A dear friend whom I loved and lost," she had told Marian one day when she had questioned her concerning him. "He belonged to the days of my youth, days that were freighted with both great joys and great griefs. I try not to think of them, and to talk of them I cannot."

Marian had never spoken to her again concerning Ellis Deering or the days of her youth, and even now, when she felt that she must know the meaning of the strange words which she had overheard, she shrank from asking Agnes concerning them.

Several days were spent in silent meditation on the subject; then she received a letter from Ada Remington which, for a while, drove all unpleasant thoughts from her mind.

The letter contained an invitation for her and Lottie Sherwood to visit them at Christmas time, and in making ready for the visit and in joyfully anticipating the pleasure it would give her, everything else was forgotten.

Agnes liked to remember, in after years, how bright and radiant had been her darling's face the morning on which she left her home for what proved to be an ill-omened visit; for as she saw it then, with a care-free expression on every feature and the light of a perfect faith and trust in all the world shining from her eyes, she never saw it again. For when she returned, grief had written cruel lines upon that placid brow, and from her eyes looked doubt, distrust and uncertainty.

"I do not believe," she said, as she bade Agnes good-by, "that in all the world I shall ever find a place so dear as this grand old home, nor one who loves me more truly than you." And when she returned she knew that she had spoken the truth.

Never was welcome warmer or truer than that which she and Lottie received at the beautiful town mansion of the Remingtons.

They had traveled all day, but Marian hardly realized that she was tired, as, after having removed the dust of travel, she arrayed herself in a costly evening dress of crimson velvet and descended to the dining room, where dinner was already waiting, and met, once again, the admiring gaze of Charlie Remington's eyes.

After dinner they gathered round the cosy hearth in the spacious parlor planned especially for family use, and a delightful evening was passed.

Mr. Remington, Charlie's father, was a proud, haughty man who prided himself on having descended from a family of ancient nobility; and to have his children marry well was his chief ambition; not that he cared particularly for wealth, but he would never countenance a marriage with one beneath them socially.

Judging from something Ada had said soon after she and her brother had returned from Claremont Hall, he concluded that his son had become strongly attached to Marian Claremont; and that night he watched her attentively and weighed well every word she said.

But she could talk intelligently and well, and the fastidious old man was charmed by her beauty and dignity.

"I think you must resemble your father," he said to her, after having studied the sweet face for a while. "I have no acquaintance whatever with the Claremont family; but I met Dick Claremont once at a public meeting of some sort, and I never forgot the expression of the dark, noble-looking face. You are Dick Claremont's daughter, are you not?"

"Yes," answered Marian, her face lighting up with pleasure, for she was proud of the ancient name of Claremont and loved to think that she resembled her father's family.

"I think, myself," she added, after a moment's pause, "that I resemble him. There is a life-size portrait of him hanging in the library at home, and I have often thought that the face which looks at me from the mirror is very like the face which looks at me from the canvas on the wall. I have a portrait of him in this locket which I will show you." And she unclasped a slender gold chain concealed beneath the lace around her neck and drew forth the old-fashioned locket which had been her mother's, and handed it to Mr. Remington.

"Yes," he remarked, as he gazed on the pictured faces which the locket contained, "you are decidedly like your father; indeed, the resemblance is wonderful. This is a portrait of your mother, I suppose—this lovely face opposite? You do not resemble her in the least. Who was she?"

"Her name was Blake, but I know nothing of her family. She was an only child, and as my grandmother died when I was but three years old, and my grandfather went to live with a distant relative, I know nothing of them expect what Aunt Agnes has told me, and that is very little, for she dislikes talking of the past. My mother was her dearest friend; her death and the extreme sadness of my father's death seem to have cast a sadness over Claremont Hall that has never left it. I know nothing of them, even, save the bare facts that my mother died when I was born and that my father was drowned."

Mr. Remington handed the locket back to Marian; then, as he again fell to studying the beautiful face, he felt that his son would do well to win one who appeared to be so truly noble. She would do credit to the house of Remington; she would receive the admiration and the homage of the fashionable world, and reflect fresh glory on his name.

A round of social gaieties followed that delightfully quiet evening, and had not Marian Claremont's mind been entirely filled with the image of one bright, handsome face, her head might have been completely turned by the attention she received and the many flattering compliments that were showered upon her. But her smiles were all given to Charlie Remington, and he followed her like her shadow. He enjoyed talking to her, her noble thoughts and eloquent words filled him with wonder and delight, and there were tones in her voice that thrilled the very depths of his heart.

It soon became apparent to all that Charlie was deeply in love with his sister's friend; also they believed that his love would be returned; and Mrs. Remington, a proud, vain woman, becoming completely charmed by the brilliant loveliness of the girl whom she felt would one day be a member of their family circle, threw open her magnificent mansion for a Christmas ball and spared neither labor nor money to make it a success.

"Marian must be presented to our set," she told Ada. "She is so very beautiful she is sure to create a great sensation." And the eyes of the vain woman wandered to the sweet face that was bending over some music in the adjoining room, and her heart swelled with foolish pride as she thought of the admiring and envious glances that would be sure to follow the beautiful girl, while she wished that they were really engaged, that she might so inform her friends.

Marian, herself, spent a great deal of thought in choosing her dress for that ball, feeling anxious, for the first time in her life, to look her best.

"You look like a queen—a very beautiful queen," Lottie Sherwood said, when at last Marian was dressed and entered her room a radiant vision in amber satin trimmed with rich black lace, and with diamonds around her neck and diamonds encircling her head like points of flame.

Mrs. Remington's rooms were magnificently decorated and brilliantly lighted; everything was perfect, even to the happiness that filled Charlie Remington's heart, as, with Marian Claremant at his side, he opened the ball.

How sweet and lovable she was! The tender radiance of those clear eyes, the perfume of the roses she carried, had some secret charm for him. And in the dark after days that followed, that same perfume would bring to him a deep sense of pain.

But no thought of the sorrow in store for them came to mar their happiness that night. Together they roamed through the splendidly-decorated rooms; together they bent above the bright flowers that were blooming everywhere, enjoying their fragrance and their beauty.

"Marian," he said, as his eyes were fixed upon her with a tender gaze, "when I look at you, all my life seems complete, all my hopes and dreams realized. You are my sister's guest, but I shall visit you in your own home again; then I shall ask for a promise that will make earth like heaven. Tell me, Marian, may I come soon?"

For answer she placed both little hands within his own, and although she spoke no word, he was satisfied.

He never forgot her as he saw her then, the gaslight revealing the pure loveliness of her face as it was raised to his with the light of a perfect trust shining in her eyes.

Mrs. Remington was more than satisfied with the admiration which Marian excited; and she again found herself wishing that everything were settled, that she might say "Yes" to the many questions that were whispered to her concerning their possible engagement.

But Marian, although she saw admiring eyes follow her, and heard murmurs of admiration from those who watched her, was indifferent to all and everything save Charlie Remington; and she felt that earth held no pleasure, no happiness for her save in his love.

For he loved her; she was sure of that now, and after the last guest had departed and she again found herself in the solitude of her own room, instead of seeking rest in sleep, she turned out the gas and sat down by the window to dream of the bright future that awaited her. And not until the eastern skies had taken on a tinge of golden splendor did she sleep, and then it was to dream of a pair of deep blue eyes looking into her own, revealing the love of a noble heart.

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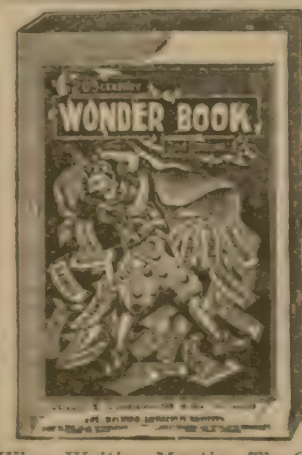

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CHAPTER IX.

"DO YOU KNOW BILL BRAND?"

"Do you mean to tell me, Bennie," Lem went on, looking in intense disapprobation upon the scion of the house of Parker, "that you really intend to run away with this show? Is that what you mean?"

"That's just what I mean."

"But you shan't do it, Bennie."

"The old man ain't never goin' to lick me ag'in, Lem. I'm a-goin' an' you nor no one can't stop me."

"I can tell your pa and he can stop ye, I guess," said Lem.

"But ye wouldn't do that, would ye, Lem? I hain't always liked everything you've said an' done, but I never have found ye a tale-bearer."

That's so, Bennie, you've the first time to find that I've gone to your pa with any story about you. When I've been unable to settle a thing with you I've just let it go unsettled. But this ain't a matter between us. 'Tain't no good thing for any boy to travel with one o' them circuses. It needs a tough boy to hold his own in such a gang and while you're mean enough—maybe—you ain't husky enough. It needs a fighter, Bennie, and you ain't no fighter. Why, I ain't much myself, but I've walloped ye many times an' licked more'n one boy for lickin' you. You're cut out for some more peaceable life than circusin', or ye ain't cut out for anything. Now, Bennie, I'm a-goin' to tell yer pa and ma about yer plan, an' I guess they'll take care o' ye."

"D'ye know how pa'll take care o' me if ye tell him that?" asked Bennie, with a queer look in his weak face.

"I can guess."

"He'll take me out in the barn an' wear a tug out on my frame."

"Not so bad as that. He's too careful of the tugs. He might waste a hoop-pole on ye, though, Bennie, an' the good he'd do ye might be worth it."

"Do you really think so? Well, he ain't goin' to git any chance at me that way. Say, Lem Shelton, if ye blow on me, I'll waylay ye some time with a gang o' circus toughs an' see ye beat up till ye can't wiggle yer ear to say nothin' of a tattlin' tongue."

"I'm goin' to do what I think is right," said Lem, earnestly, "and I ain't goin' to be worried at all about you an' yer gang. First place, Bennie, ye've got yer gang ter git. The kind o' fellers yer a talkin' about ain't goin' to take kindly to you. They'd likely leave ye dead somewhere in the woods before ye'd traveled with 'em a month."

"I know I ain't no great fighter, Lem," said Bennie, thoughtfully, "but I can learn. First of all, I ain't no coward—but, here we are at the grounds, an' the side show tent is up, an' they're plowin' the ring under the top o' the big tent. They ain't no sides on, Lem, an' we can see 'em.'

"An' ye ain't exactly a hero, either, Bennie," replied Lem, musingly. "Yes; they're plowin' off the sod for the ring, but it don't look no different to me than any other plowin'. What is thar so interestin' about it?"

"Interestin'? Interestin'? What is thar interestin' about it? Why, Lem, hear that man cuss! I mean that red-headed man that's drivin' the horses."

"Well, I hear 'im."

"Well, ye've heard the feller cuss that runs the stump machine?"

"Yes."

"An' the feller that runs the pile-driver?"

"Yes."

"An' Uncle George Van Gordon when he's feedin' the thrashin-machine an' the thistles git in his mouth?"

"Yes."

"An' ye've heard Bob Languist cuss when he was shoein' oxen an' they swiped 'im in the eyes with their tails?".

"Yes."

"And you've heard the old man—I mean my pa?"

"Sure."

"Well, can any of 'em swear equal to this man. He's great."

"Humph!" grunted Lem.

"I never heard no man swearin' anything as good as this one—lis'en to 'im now—except Bob Lake, the man that helped about the log-rollin' last winter!" went on Bennie, enthusiastically.

"But Bob Lake didn't learn with a circus. He used to run on the Erie Canal," sneered Lem, bound to underrate the circus as much as he could, simply for Bennie's sake. "That's the place to educate yourself fer cussin', if that's yer ambition, my boy. Now, hark! That feller's a good swearer, but, honest, I don't b'lieve he's as good as your old man. Better stay at home, Bennie, an' have the real thing. Ye don't have to travel with no circuses to git that when it comes to cussin'."

"Howsumever, as Bow-legged Pete, the One-Eyed Scout said in the dime novel, 'I'm a-goin' to go my own way, an' it's the same way the circus is a-goin', sure."

"Not if I can git to yer father before ye absquatulate," as Knock-Kneed Nate, the Giant Scalper said in the story paper," declared Lem. "I'm goin' to him now."

"No, ye won't, Lem; I——"

But Lem had started. It was in vain that Bennie called after him. He went straight down street toward Lather's corner, expecting to find Sam Parker there to to meet him on the way.

"Hello, there, kid!"

Lem looked up to meet the eyes of a stranger, a tall, stooping, smooth-shaven, dark man, evil-eyed and otherwise unprepossessing. The boy was not aware that he had ever seen this man before and attempted to pass him without returning his salutation.

"Say, boy, I want to know if there's a man in this town named Brand—Bill Brand. He's an old friend of mine."

"Bill Brand lives up the river a piece," answered Lem, civilly enough. "He ain't any friend o' mine an' I think you could do better. Good day, sir."

CHAPTER X.

A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION.

"You don't seem to like my old friend," said the stranger, eyeing the boy closely. "Maybe he's walloped you some time. I've known him to wallop boys in the past—that is, when they give him sass."

"Well," said Lem, curtly, "Bill Brand never licked me. I licked him and rushed him into the mill race."

"You did? You?"

"I did—I."

"How's that?"

"Ask Bill. I reckon he'll remember somethin' about it. 'Twasn't so very long ago."

"Is Bill an invalid? He hain't been paralyzed, has he?" asked the man, leering disagreeably into Lem's face and touching his shoulder with a long, dirty forefinger.

"Bill's in prime health. In fact, he often brags about his fightin' ability, but no more to me," replied Lem, jerking away from the man's hand.

"Then you must be a good one with your dukes for a kid, or else, my boy——"

"Or else what?" asked Lem.

"Or else you must be an able liar for a kid."

"Do you call me that?" Lem asked, squaring off and hitching up his pantaloons. "I want to know."

"No-o-o, not exactly. Be easy. What's Brand doin'?"

"Workin' 'round a saw-mill."

"A sawyer, eh?"

"Nope; a sawyer is a skilled workman. He jist slings lumber an' rolls saw-logs and the like. That's all he's good for 'ceptin' a little trick at pilotin' board rafts sometimes."

"And I suppose you're a superior being—maybe the boss of all the great men in these parts," sneered the man. "What are ye, any way, that you put Bill Brand down because he's a laborer?"

"I'm a shingle packer now."

"A shingle packer?"

"That's it."

"I expected you to say you was something away ahead of that. Why, a shingle packer don't loom up high, you know that."

"Well, I've invented a way to pack and count shingles faster'n any one else can, and I do the work of two ordinary packers," explained Lem, not without some natural pride in his achievement.

"And d'ye git paid for it?"

Lem's face reddened.

"I can see ye don't. Yer foolish."

"Well, you see, sir, I'm only a boy yet, an' I have to do the work for the man I live with. Sometime I hope to set up for myself an' make some money out o' that an' other schemes I've got as well as some I may hatch up later. But, honest, now, Bill Brand ain't much of a man, noway, and I really licked 'im an' kicked 'im into the mill race," the boy added, laughing at the memory of that event.

"Could ye prove it?" asked the stranger, exasperatingly.

"Yes."

"Who by?"

"A lot of men and boys."

"Well, one'll do."

"An' I'm the one—cuss 'im!"

The words were spoken in a loud, harsh voice which Lem recognized as that of his vanquished foeman.

"Bill Brand!" exclaimed the stranger.

"Yes, Sim; glad to see ye." The two shook hands. "What's this ornery kid tellin' ye about gittin' the best o' me fer?"

"So he did, did he?"

"Yes: he did."

"Licked you and fired you into the tail-race of the mill?"

"Yes: he did."

"Shake, boy! You're a good 'un."

The stranger held his hand out toward Lem, but the boy ignored it and dodged past him, crying:

"Yes, I'm goin' to shake ye both. If yer a friend o' Brand's ye ain't no friend o' mine, I guess. Leastways, I won't take no chances on you that way. So long, gents."

Bennie Parker was coming down the middle of the street, intent on catching Lem, and, if possible, preventing him from informing Sam Parker of Bennie's intention to run away with the circus. As Lem hurried on he saw Bennie stop and engage in conversation with Bill Brand and the man whom the latter had called Sim.

"I s'pose that's some showman," Lem muttered, "an' Bennie'll try to make some kind o' arrangements through him. I would'nt put it past Bill to egg Bennie on if he can. He's mean enough to do a thing

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In the square below are a lot of figure 7s. They are all jumbled up and mixed together so that they are hard to count. The idea of the puzzle is to count the number of figures in the square. Every reader of this paper has a chance to win a prize. We know that very few persons will count the exact number, but we not only give prizes to the person who counts correctly but also to 1244 other persons who come nearest to the correct number. With this number of chances every person who answers this offer has a chance to get a prize. The person who counts the exact number of figures in the square gets $200, the person who comes the nearest gets $100, the next $50, the next $20, the next $10, and the next 1240 persons in the contest get presents, the average value of these presents is 50 cents each.

In case two or more persons are tied for one prize then the prize is equally divided. There is no guess work in this puzzle. It is simply a test of your ability to count figures correctly. Every figure is shown plainly but the figures are mixed up so that it takes a lot of patience and care in order to count them correctly. This contest closes Thursday evening, December 31st, at 5 p. m., and no answers sent after that time will be counted.

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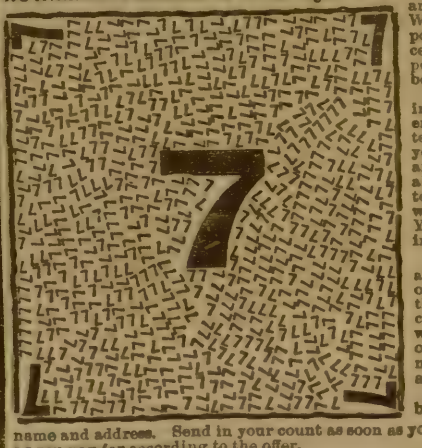
Every one entering this contest must send in 25 cents for a year's subscription, which entitles you to register one count in the contest. Or if you send 50 cents you will get four year's subscription to the WOMAN'S WORLD and be entitled to four counts. If you are already a subscriber you may enter the contest just the same, and your new subscription will be added to your present subscription. You can also get your friends to subscribe and increase your number of chances to win prizes.

By next nearest we mean the next nearest above or below the correct number. In case one person should send in a count of one more than actually correct and another sent in a count of one less than actually correct they would tie for the prize of next nearest, and so on with the next nearest. A tie for the prize means the prize will be divided equally among those who are tied for the prize.

The counts must be filled in on the blanks below. Write your count plainly, also your name and address. Send in your count as soon as you have made it. You may send in as many as you pay for according to the offer.

HOW MANY FIGURES IN THIS SQUARE ?



CONDITIONS.—Each person must count the number of 7s in this square and fill in the count in the proper space. For example, you will fill in "1st count 726," and if you send in four counts fill in the other spaces in the blank. No person employed by the WOMAN'S WORLD, or any resident of the city of Chicago is allowed to compete for the prizes. No one knows the number of 7s in the square. The count will not be made until after the first of January, 1904, when the figures will be counted by a committee and the correct answer will be given. Then all the counts sent in by subscribers will be compared and the prizes awarded. The paper and receipt will be sent as soon as possible. Remember that it takes some time to properly enter subscriptions, and to take care of the large mail we receive daily, so if you do not hear from us at once do not be alarmed. No counts will be changed after they are received by us. Remit by Post-office or Express order, or registered letter. Counts must be in our office before 5 p. m., December 31st, 1903. If you send 25 cents write your count in the first space. If you send 50 cents write a count in each of the four spaces. Twenty-five cents entitles you to one year's subscription and one count; 50 cents entitles you to four years' subscription and four counts. If you are already a subscriber your subscription will be extended. The subscription blank is made so that you can answer either for one or four counts. Cross out the word "four" if you send one count, or cross out the word "one" if you send four counts. Extra blanks will be furnished free upon request. Remember we are a responsible concern and that the prizes will be faithfully awarded; also remember there is no guess work about the matter. It is simply a test of patience and correctness.

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In case two or more persons send the same count and are entitled to a prize then the amount of the prize is divided equally.

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1st Count.	2nd Count.	3rd Count.	4th Count.

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like that. I'm goin' to git Sam Parker after that boy right away."

As he neared Lather's store he saw Bill and Sim and Bennie going back toward the walnut grove, near which the circus tents were being erected.

He found Sam Parker seated comfortably in the office at the rear of the store, talking with Lathers and Chet Ledyard, a druggist who had a pharmacy across the street.

Mr. Lathers was a man of medium size, middle aged, well appearing and rather neatly attired. His complexion was dark, his eyes were blue, his nose was prominent and his whiskers were of the cut once known as "Burnsides," a style perpetuated in a modified form in the "Chauncey's" of today. His manner was affable and his speech betrayed his familiarity with the business of larger towns than Larnsville. He was one who thought it better to be "a big toad in a little puddle than a small toad in a big puddle." He occupied the greater part of the puddle at Larnsville and was in snapping distance of all the flies that buzzed in its business circle. Every little while he made away with one of them—in a safe and business-like way—and then the puddle was roiled a little by stirring up some of his past and the names of certain men who had been his partners and who had got poor as fast as he had got rich were whispered from one to another. But Mr. Lathers didn't care, and he was as accommodating as ever, not even holding grudges against those who had reviled him. Mr. Ledyard, the druggist, tall, thin, pale, fishy-looking and mean and small as one of his bad-tasting ounces, was orating about the virtues of a certain porous plaster when Lem entered and called out to Parker.

"Say, Sam Parker, Bennie's with one o' them showmen an' he says he's goin' to run away with the show."

"Don't you think Bennie's such a fool as that!" grunted Parker. "He's foolin' ye, Lem."

"He ain't!" declared the boy. "He ain't! But you're foolin' yerself, Sam Parker."

CHAPTER XI.

INVITED TO DINE.

Lem saw that Parker did not believe that Bennie would make his threat good. Something must be done. He would hunt up Mrs. Mr. Lathers, an' ev'ry time we've been introduced to some chap that's talked Sam out of a lot o' money. Fust 'twas yer cousin, the life insurance agent. The comp'ny busted on us. Next 'twas that patent gate man. Sam is stuck with the gate, an' some chap that prob'ly is in with the fust one has come round an' claims Sam has no right to the patent an' 'll be persecuted for fringementation fer ev'ry gate he puts up. Next 'twas the patent wagon brake man. He got fifty dollars out o' Sam an' yer brother's father-in-law, Mr. Radisher, that promised to put the brakes on ev'ry wagon he sold, hain't never put a brake on one an' it's been three years now. You remember the guests we met at your house later an' how much they talked Sam out of—I don't need to mention 'em. If there's any man with a big scheme that's goin' to be with you today I'd ruther you'd invite us to stay away—it'll be cheaper fer us to buy our dinner at the tavern—more satisfactory, even, to do without it."

"I remember some of the guests you speak of and some of their transactions with Sam, Mrs. Parker," said Lathers in his best manner. "I am sorry if some of the things didn't pan out well for Sam, but I had nothing to do with them. Your husband's meeting all those men at my table was a series of unfortunate coincidences, I assure you. Now, Mrs. Parker, if your husband had talked those chaps out of all their money you wouldn't have blamed me for it, would you?"

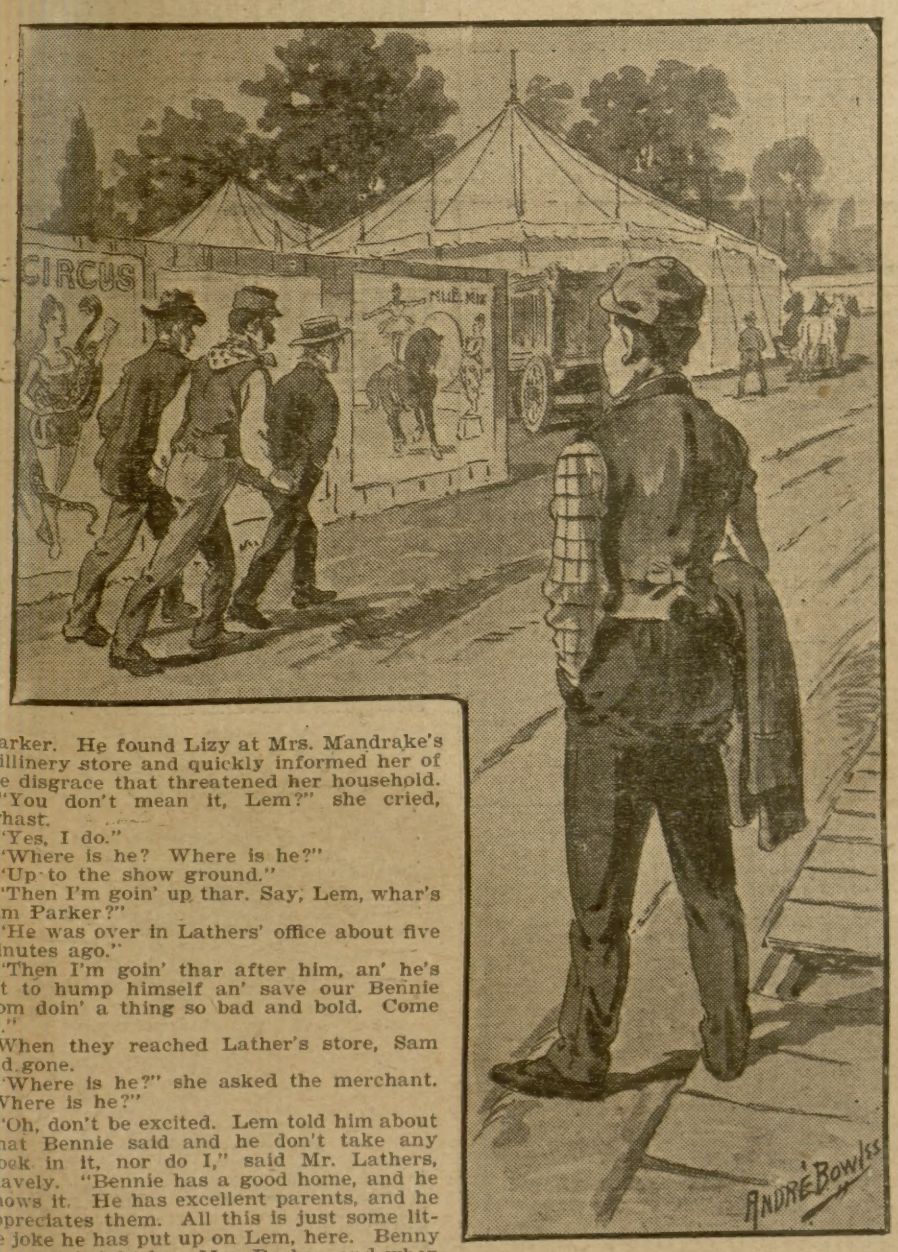
"Maybe they would, though," answered Lizy. "Makes all the difference in the world, ye know, whose ox is gored. Like's not some o' them 'ud 'a' kicked—might 'a' 'cused you of gittin' a smart percentage o' the swipin's, Mr. Lathers."

"Oh, no, Mrs. Parker!"

"Well, now, it's right this way, Mr. Lathers. If we ain't invited to your house to meet no one, we'll go. If you've invited any one thar to meet us, he won't meet us—that is if Lizy Parker knows herself, an' I guess she does a few leaves."

"As I said, Mrs. Parker, there'll be no one there sharper than I am."

"That's likely," she said, dryly. "Now what's yer scheme? You can't make me b'lieve Mrs. Lathers is jist dyin' to entertain me. Though I'm told she used to be a hired gal, she holds herself considerable above



HE SAW BILL AND SIM AND BENNIE GOING TOWARD THE CIRCUS.

Parker. He found Lizy at Mrs. Mandrake's millinery store and quickly informed her of the disgrace that threatened her household.

"You don't mean it, Lem?" she cried, aghast.

"Yes, I do."

"Where is he? Where is he?"

"Up to the show ground."

"Then I'm goin' up thar. Say, Lem, whar's Sam Parker?"

"He was over in Lathers' office about five minutes ago."

"Then I'm goin' thar after him, an' he's got to hump himself an' save our Bennie from doin' a thing so bad and bold. Come on."

When they reached Lather's store, Sam had gone.

"Where is he?" she asked the merchant. "Where is he?"

"Oh, don't be excited. Lem told him about what Bennie said and he don't take any stock in it, nor do I," said Mr. Lathers, suavely. "Bennie has a good home, and he knows it. He has excellent parents, and he appreciates them. All this is just some little joke he has put up on Lem, here. Benny is a very bright boy, Mrs. Parker, and when he gets done with school he can have a place here with me if he wants it. I was telling Sam that this morning. Give the boy a little leeway and he'll come out all the better for it. He don't need watching. If he did, I'm sure I shouldn't want him. Say, Mrs. Parker, I want you to go right up to my house. Mrs. Lathers will be delighted to see you. I want you and Mr. Parker to take dinner with us. Sam has promised."

"Is Sam Parker goin' to take dinner with you today, Mr. Lathers?" asked Lizy, apprehensively.

"Yes."

"Who else?"

"No one but yourself."

"No patent-right man?"

"No."

"Nor no lightnin'-rod agent?"

"No."

"Nor no county history portrait man?"

"No one of the kind. Why?"

"Won't Sam meet up with no kind o' sharper if he takes dinner to your house today?"

"No."

"Sure?"

"No one sharper than I am, Mrs. Parker. What are you driving at?"

"We've took dinner with you a few times, plain saw-mill women like I am."

"She don't, Mrs. Parker. Only last night she says to me, 'Oh, how I do like that Mrs. Samuel Parker.' She woke up just to say it and went right to sleep again. You must have been on her mind. This morning when I told her of it she said, 'Oh, how I do like that dear woman! It's all true if I was dreaming.' So you must go right up to the house, Mrs. Parker, but first I want you to see some new dress patterns I've got in. I'm goin' to do up one for you, Mrs. Parker—Mrs. Lathers picked it out and it's just like Mrs. Rusher got in Philadelphia—an' it will be put in the account and Sam can pay for it just when he wants to. Isn't it a beauty, Mrs. Parker? Oh, yes, you'll take it—you must have it, you know. Don't worry about Bennie. I'll guarantee he don't go away with the show. There, I'll do it up and put in all the trimmings and I guess some of those women up the river will stare when they see you with it on. Your taste is so good, Mrs. Parker. Now go right up to the house and I'll bring Sam up with me. My wife knows how to get up a good dinner, you'll see."

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Just sit down and write me for it today.

Mrs. Cora B. Miller, Box No. 25 Kokomo, Ind.

RODS for locating gold and silver, lost treasures, etc. Guaranteed. Circular 2 cts. Address BRYANT BROS., Box 121-37, DALLAS, Texas

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J.P. Those suffering from weaknesses which sap the pleasures of life should take Juven Pills. One box will tell a story of marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever been offered. Sent by mail in plain package only on receipt of this advertisement and $1.

Made by its originators C. I. Hood Co., props. Hood's Sarsaparilla, Lowell, Mass.

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Primary, Secondary or Tertiary Blood Poison

Permanently Cured. You can be treated at home under same guaranty. Capital $500,000. We solicit the most obstinate cases. We have cured the worst cases in 15 to 35 days. If you have taken mercury, iodide potash and still have aches and pains, Mucus Patches in Mouth, Sore Throat, Pimples, Copper-Colored Spots, Ulcers on any part of the body, Hair or Eyebrows falling out, write for proofs of cures.

Cook Remedy Co.

1730 MASONIC TEMPLE, Chicago, Ill. 100-page Book Free.

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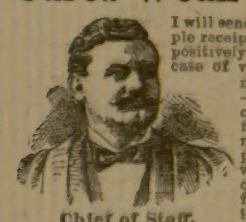
Cures Weak Men Free



Chief of Staff.

I will send FREE to any man a simple receipt for self-treatment which positively will promptly cure any case of vital weakness, lost vigor, nervous debility, varicocele—whether the result of excesses, dissipation or natural development. It cannot fail. I speak from experience. I was a physical wreck, and it cured me quickly, giving me buoyant freshness and sturdy vitality and vigor with the ambition that raised me from a hardworking shoemaker to a profitable profession. I cured myself, so can any and every weak man. My case was chronic, desperate, but this receipt brought me new life almost instantly. God alone knows how I suffered with weakness and humiliation, and in memory of this suffering I extend the helping hand to my fellow men. Simply send your name and address and I will send the receipt in a plainly sealed envelope and you cure yourself at home, to be a man among men. Delays are dangerous when health, happiness and even life itself are at stake. Write today. Address NORTHWESTERN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, 224 Lincoln Bldg., DETROIT, MICH.

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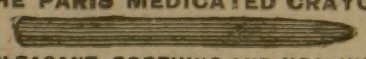
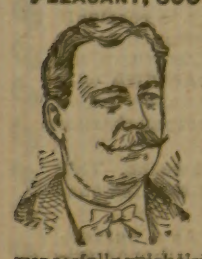
TEN DAYS' TRIAL OFFERED MEN.

Great Parisian Method That Cures Diseases of Men Without Taking Medicine Into the Stomach and in Their Own Home—Let Every Man Send for It.

THE PARIS MEDICATED CRAYON



PLEASANT, SOOTHING AND HEALING



By a wonderful method successfully used for years in France, and now for the first time introduced in America, it is possible for any man, no matter how bad off, to instantly regain the vigor of young manhood without taking any medicine into the stomach, and to prove that it will do this we offer a full Ten Days' Treatment to every man sending name and address. It cures in wonderfully quick time lost vitality, emaciation, prematurity, varicocele, hydrocele, stricture, blood poison, unnatural discharges, irritation and enlargement of the prostate gland, and all bladder and urinary disorders of men. It is the only method known to science that will electrify the body, rout wasting diseases, create vigor, warmth and force, and all this without medicine taken into the stomach.

Write to Dr. Stevens & Co., Columbus, O., Box 1272 We offer Ten Days' Trial Treatment to every man. It is no "prescription," "deposit," or "C. O. D." scheme, as this firm is too large to resort to such petty ways. We send the most complete book ever written on the Diseases of Men, telling all, and fully illustrated with 40 engravings from life. Everything is confidential, and sent perfectly plain. We trust every gentleman reader of this paper will write us at once and thus get the Ten Days' Trial Treatment and book.

When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

"She ought to—considerin'," replied Lizy.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ELOQUENT "LORD" RUSTLER.

In spite of the fact that Mr. Lathers had assured Mrs. Parker that she and her husband were expected to meet no one at dinner except himself and his accomplished wife, they met the distinguished citizen of Louisville popularly known as Lord Rustler.

As may be inferred, Rustler was not a real lord. He was a plain, untitled American citizen, a native of New Jersey, and the title was accorded him by his fellow townsmen in good-natured raillery because of the fact that when he had located in the village he had brought with him a menial functionary known as his "valet," who had been seen to clean his shoes and to stand behind his chair, as he ate, to scare the flies away from him with a bunch of rattling paper fastened to a broom handle which he waved frantically about the great man's head, sometimes to the great man's temporary discomfiture.

But that hadn't lasted long. The valet and other evidences of affluence foreign to Louisville disappeared, and Lord Rustler announced his intention to go in and out before his fellow citizens in humility and simplicity. This great man, who said that he had been a partner with Jay Gould and had laid the foundations of the wealth of Jay Cooke, Jim Fiske and other once well-known financiers, had allied his fortunes with those of Larnsville and hereafter would devote himself to the material development of his adopted town, not forgetting its social, intellectual and spiritual development.

He would bring capital to the place, factories would hum and roar and sing and rattle on every hand. Larnsville would become a great railroad center. It would soon have a population of ten thousand. The growth from that figure to the hundred thousand mark would be accomplished at only a few stupendous jumps in quick succession. Larnsville would be the industrial and municipal wonder of America. Then, and not till then, would Lord Rustler rest. Then, and not till then, would he be satisfied with the results of his foresight and of his ceaseless planning and working for his townsmen and all their interests.

He had already secured his own election as burgess (mayor) several times by earnest and skillful representations along this line. But the town had not grown. No new building had been erected within the corporation limits in fifteen years, and in that time two had been destroyed by fire and one had been washed away. The Larnsville fire department had been powerless against the devastation of the "fire fiend" and Lord Rustler's oft-described defenses against the encroachments, spring and fall, of the Neoga and Tionesqua rivers, swollen to a murky flood, had never materialized.

Lord Rustler often explained that this semi-annual destruction by the backwaters of the combined rivers might easily have been stopped had the public spirit of the Larnsville people been equal to the demands upon it. It may be remarked that, during the period referred to, a small foundry, a fanning-mill factory and some wagon shops had gone out of business and no new manufactures had been established except a little cigar factory. In the same time an equal number of families had moved into and away from the town and the deaths had exceeded the births by three.

All this was vouched for by Jimmy Seward, the shoemaker, who, by the way, was during all local political campaigns an outspoken anti-Rustler man. Yet Rustler survived. Some he yet dazzled with his big plans. To some he was yet Lord Rustler, as of old. To some his wife was still Lady Rustler, and would be to the end. By all she was recognized as the leader of Larnsville's four hundred, a social set that could have been counted upon the fingers and toes of any one except a brakeman or a buzz-sawyer. He had not waxed rich. He had not waxed powerful except as a talker. He seemingly never despaired of redeeming the town. He was always willing to sacrifice himself to its interests if he could do so as its chief magistrate.

The Parkers were surprised to see Lord Rustler at Mr. Lathers', and the merchant, remembering his pledge to Mrs. Parker, felt impelled to explain that the magnate's visit was quite informal and that the honor he had conferred on the small company had not been anticipated.

Now that he was there, however, Mr. Rustler would speak with Mr. Parker about a new enterprise that he had projected, one that would hasten the development of all of Larnsville's interests and bring wealth to those who were wise enough to invest in it at the outset. Mr. Rustler would construct a railway from Larnsville to Berwyn Center, nine miles down the river, there to intersect the Erie road, effecting a saving of many miles and several hours between Buffalo and New York.

The line had been chartered. Mr. Rustler was its president. A good man was needed as superintendent and after the road was constructed that functionary would receive a salary of not less than ten thousand dollars per annum. Mr. Rustler's proposition that Mr. Parker accept that important position quite took Mr. Parker's breath away.

Mr. Parker would be called upon to invest two hundred dollars at once to be used toward preliminary expenses. Could Mr. Parker afford to pass by such a glorious opportunity to take his place among the big men of that part of the country? Mr. Rustler and Mr. Lathers thought not. Mr. Lathers would advance the two hundred dollars and take Mr. Parker's note indorsed by Mrs. Parker.

Then Lady Rustler dropped in, "just looking for Mr. Rustler," and invited Mr. and Mrs. Parker to tea after the afternoon show. Mr. Rustler, who, as burgess, had received many free tickets, would take the whole party to the circus.

"So nice of him," gurgled Mrs. Lathers.

"'Tis so," answered Lizy. Right after tea Sam and Lizy signed for the two hundred dollars. Then Lord Rustler remembered that it would be "his busy evening" and Mr. Lathers had to go to the store. "I guess it's all right," said Lizy half-heartedly. "Now where's Benny? I've been troubled about him, Samuel. I didn't see him at the show this afternoon. Let's go."

They found Lem Shelton listening to the roaring and seductive oratory of a sideshow "prator."

"Whar's Bennie?" asked Sam, touching the boy on the shoulder.

"I hain't seen 'im since I told ye what he said about runnin' away with the circus," replied Lem dolefully. "I've looked ev'rywhere for him an' can't find him. I expect that man is hidin' 'im somewhere."

"What man?" gasped Parker, forgetting that he was a railroad superintendent.

"The feller that I told ye was talkin' to him and Bill Brand," answered Lem. "I wish ye'd looked after him right then."

"Good Lord!" cried Lizy. "What's all our good fortune to this awful bad fortune? Sam, you've got to find our Bennie! You must do it, Sam!"

"I'll do it," said Sam grimly.

This thrilling story of youthful adventures will be continued next week. Our patterns and cameras are free to all subscribers. Please note our announcement on pages thirteen and fifteen.

Cleopatra's Necklace.

(Continued from page five.)

in my career, but Mrs. Harcourt was the coolest of all.

"Is that all, Mr. Tellfair?" she asked.

"It is all."

I rose and picked up my hat. She quietly looked up at me and seemed to smile triumphantly.

"I judge from your questions that you belong to the police?" she ventured.

"I am a detective."

"I thought as much. I hope you are not going to drag me into the investigation concerning Mrs. Marlowe, since I was her visitor that night?"

"I don't see why I should."

"I thank you, sir."

"The Egyptian necklace is still missing," said I, looking down into her face. "One of the gems, however, has turned up—sold to a jeweler by a man who has fled the city."

I saw her start a little at this.

"Then if you could find that man, Mr. Tellfair, you might reach the end of your investigation?" she said.

I felt that my time had come.

"That would naturally be the supposition, Mrs. Harcourt, but the man who sold the jewel is not guilty."

"Oh! you see I cannot reason as you detectives can," she smiled, moving the feathered fan again. "It is very close in here. I must call Francis to admit some air."

Her face had suddenly flushed and she had put out her hand to touch a silver call-bell on the marble stand when I spoke again:

"I may qualify my remarks by saying that the seller of the gem which belongs to Cleopatra's necklace may not be guilty of

(Contniued on page fifteen.)

He Sends It Free to Men.

The following letter from a Washing Machine Manufacturer speaks for itself:

Dear Editor—If any of your readers are suffering from lost manhood, debilitating drains, run down or abused vital organs, sexual weakness, etc., and want a sure, quick cure, tell them to write to me and I will gladly send them a free prescription with full directions for a home treatment in plain, sealed envelope—one that I know will do the work. There is no charge whatever—just tell them to write me in confidence and I will show them how to avoid scheming medical quacks and regain their health without personal embarrassment. Yours respectfully, THOMAS BRADFORD, 415 Bradford Building, Cincinnati, Ohio.

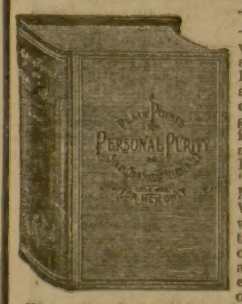
Other papers please copy.

Good Sign.

"Did Jones buy that thousand shares of stock in the Texas oil well that he was talking about?"

"Guess so; saw him pawning his watch yesterday."

A BOOK FOR MEN ONLY.



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The author is a well-known reformer and brilliant lecturer and preacher who has ventured upon a field generally supposed to belong to medical men only, but too often appropriated by quacks and charlatans, acquitting himself in a manner which has gained the approval of such leaders as Prof. David Swing, Bishop John H. Vincent, and scores of other prominent humanitarians. If this book were in the hands of every young man and its advice followed, ill health, vice and crime would be banished from the world in a single generation. This is a large volume of 317 beautifully printed pages, 5½x8 in., elegantly bound in dark cherry colored cloth with stamp on back and sides in pure gold. Price,

$1.00 BY MAIL, POSTPAID.

A. B. KUHLMAN CO., DEPT. A-4, ATLAS BLOCK, CHICAGO.

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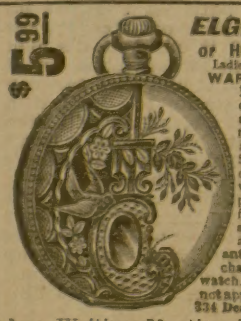

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Ladies or Gents size, stem wind and set. WARRANTED 20 YEARS. 14k. Gold plate hunting-case, elegantly engraved. Fit for a king. No better watches made. Must be seen to be appreciated. Special Offer: Send us your name and address and we will send this watch by express C.O.D. with privilege of examination. If found satisfactory pay the agent our special price, $5.99 and express charges. A guarantee and beautiful chain and charm sent free with every watch. Write at once as this may not appear again. BOOTH & CO. 234 Dearborn St., B-306, CHICAGO.

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Honest Men and Women have only to send their name and address without one cent, to receive by return mail a full sized box of Make-Man Tablets.

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We have no free samples that will only last a day or two. We give you a full sized package and plenty of time to see the results. We are curing thousands every day, and we can cure you; if you are weak, worn out, run down, always tired, nervous, do not sleep well, have female disorders, stomach, liver or kidney trouble, are overworked, or have any kind of blood or nervous disease, send to us at once, and our staff of physicians, which is made up of men of high standing in the medical world, will give you advice absolutely free. What more can any honest firm do to relieve the weak and suffering? It matters not how long you have suffered, how old you are or what brought about your terrible malady, if you will only send in your name and address you can be cured. Why suffer another minute when help is knocking at your door? Our new book, which is full of valuable and interesting reading matter, will be sent you absolutely FREE upon request. The Make-Man Tablet Company, Suite E, 119 Dearborn Street, Chicago.

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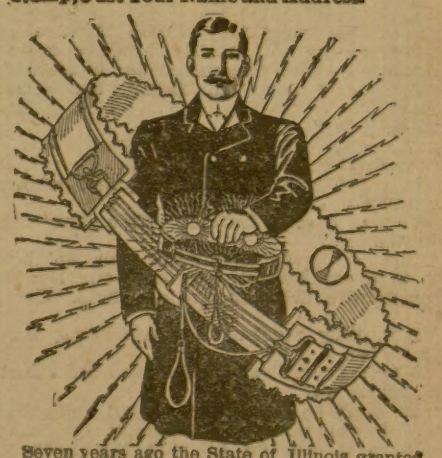
Send Your Application At Once To The Physician's Institute.

They Will Send You Absolutely Free One of Their 100 Guage Supreme Electric Belts, the Belt Which Has Made so Many Wonderful Cures—You Needn't Send Even a Postage Stamp, Just Your Name and Address.



Seven years ago the State of Illinois granted to the Physicians' Institute of Chicago a charter.

There was need of something above the ordinary method of treatment for chronic diseases, something more than any one specialist or any number of specialists acting independently could do, so the State itself, under the powers granted it by its general laws, gave the power to the Physicians' Institute to furnish to the sick such help as would make them well and strong.

Ever since its establishment this Institute has endeavored in every possible way to carry out the original purposes of its establishment under the beneficient laws of the State.

Three years ago, the Physicians' Institute, realizing the value of electricity in the treatment of certain phases of disease, created under the superintendence of its staff of specialists an electric belt, and this belt has been proved to be of great value as a curative agent. From time to time it has been improved until it reached that stage of perfection which warranted its present name of "Supreme."

This belt is the most effective of all agents in the cure of rheumatism, lumbago, lame back, nervous exhaustion, weakened or lost vital functions, varicocele, kidney disorders and many other complaints.

This "Supreme Electric Belt" is made in one grade only—100 guage—there is no better electric belt made and no better belt can be made. Whenever in the opinion of our staff of specialists the wonderful curative and revitalizing forces of electricity will cure you we send you, free of all cost, one of these Supreme Electric Belts. It is not sent on trial, it is yours to keep forever without the payment of one cent. This generous offer may be withdrawn at any time, so you should write to-day for this free "Supreme Electric Belt" to the Physicians' Institute, at 200 Unity Building, Chicago, Ills.

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A Box of Ovacone Free

To every woman suffering from Leucorrhea, Irregularities, Unnatural Discharges, Bearing Down Pains, or any kind of female troubles or weaknesses, simply send your name and address and we will send by return mail, free, a box of Ovacone. Northern Institute of Medicine (G), Grand Rapids, Mich.

So Pa Says.

Little Willie—Say, pa, what is an optimist?

Pa—An optimist, my son, is a man who really enjoys looking at a circus poster when he is shy the price of admission.

Every Lady Read This.

Years ago when I was a sufferer, an old nurse told me of a wonderful cure for Leucorrhea, Displacements, Painful Periods, Uterine and Ovarian troubles. It cured me none month. It is a simple harmless lotion that can be prepared by any one having the recipe. I will send it Free to every suffering sister who writes to me. I have nothing to sell. This is a case of woman helping woman. I send it Free. Address Mrs. A. Hudnut, South Bend, Ind.

A man must be in business with another man or married to a woman in order to know that he doesn't know them.

Cleopatra's Necklace.

(Continued from page fourteen.)

the double crime in Marble House. I own that circumstances are against him. He has not explained, as yet, how he came by the jewel. The party who has the treasure evidently knows if there is a pearl missing. It is the sixth pearl on the left from the top clasp."

"You will pardon me, but I must summon Francis. It is very close in here."

Her jeweled hand dropped upon the call-bell, and its silvery tones reverberated throughout the parlor. In another moment the door opened and a tall lackey flourished into the room.

"Lower the windows a little, Francis," commanded Mrs. Harcourt. "And bring me my pocketbook from the mantle in the library. I want to settle with this gentleman."

I gasped like a person suddenly deprived of air. Settle with me? What did the woman mean?

This tale of interesting and startling occurrences will be continued in next week's Ledger. The cameras and patterns given free on subscription to the Ledger are announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

STORY OF A LIFE.

Mrs. B. W. Fretter earnestly requests ***all suffering ladies*** to read this card which she allows to be published from a sense of gratitude to Dr. Coonley and ***duty*** to Him who made the doctor the instrument whereby the Orange Lily treatment for female weakness was discovered:

"After suffering for several years with displacement (prolapsus uteri) and ulceration for which I had received treatment from various physicians in vain, it was discovered that I was suffering from a cancerous growth, too. This rapidly developed and all hope of saving my life given up, and the above picture to the left, which I had taken at that time for friends, was the last I ever expected to have taken. About that time Mrs. Effie Rice told me that the Orange Lily, made by Dr. Coonley, of Detroit, had cured her of severe female troubles, and urged me to give it a trial; I did so, without faith or hope, but, thank God, after two months' treatment I began to feel better and gain flesh, and now I am ***well and strong and free*** from all traces of those troubles—see my picture to the right, ***as I am now.*** I will be pleased to answer all letters of inquiry, and send sample, if stamp is enclosed for reply.

There is no deception or scheme to get money in this, and I earnestly pray that all who read this will give the treatment a trial if they need it. Address MRS. B. W. FRETTER, Detroit, Mich."

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The patterns shown below are furnished us by one of the best, if not the best, pattern manufacturers in New York. They comprise the very latest styles, and are unequalled for accuracy in fit, simplicity in use, and are most economical of material. They sell from the stores from twenty-five to fifty cents each. Full instructions are printed on every pattern. Three months' subscription to the CHICAGO LEDGER for 25 cents and any TWO of these patterns FREE. Six months' subscription to the CHICAGO LEDGER for 50 cents and FIVE of these patterns FREE. This offer is without equal. If you are wise you will take advantage of it at once.

REMEMBER, to avoid mistakes, you must first give the number of the Pattern wanted—second, do not fail to give bust measure for waist, or waist measure if skirt is desired. Unless you do as here stated we will not know what to send you. Also, do not fail to enclose money. PATTERN DEPT., CHICAGO LEDGER, CHICAGO, I'L.

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4552 SHOULDER CAPES 32-36-40 BUST
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4553 MORNING GOWN 32-40 BUST
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4473 SHIRRED WAIST 32-40 BUST
4545 THREE PIECE SKIRT 22-30 WAIST
4546 BLOUSE WAIST 32-40 BUST
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To any one afflicted with blood poison or skin eruptions the Kent Medical Institute, 401 Houseman Building, Grand Rapids, Mich., will send a complete trial treatment of four different bottles of a great discovery entirely free, and also a book telling all about it. This is the treatment that cured so many thousands during the epidemic of blood diseases in northern Italy last summer and fall and which all the papers wrote about.

If you have been doctoring for months and can't get rid of it, if you feel yourself incurable, write this great institute for the free treatment and give them a chance to prove to you how easy it is to be cured when the right means are employed. This is a most wonderful discovery and cures in magic-like fashion blood poison no matter at what stage, or how acquired, sores, cancers, catarrh, ulcers, cuban itch, rheumatism, eruptions, eczema, psoriasis, scrofula, loss of hair and eyebrows, etc. It cleans out the blood of the poison germs, fortifies the nervous system and builds up the entire constitution.

But words will not convince you half so quickly as trying it, so send your name and address to the institute this very day and let them send you the four bottles comprising the treatment, free of charge at their own expense. We consider this a most remarkable remedy, but whether it does your own case any good or not, you can't be out a single cent, so write the first chance you have and the full free treatment and book will be sent you at once.

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

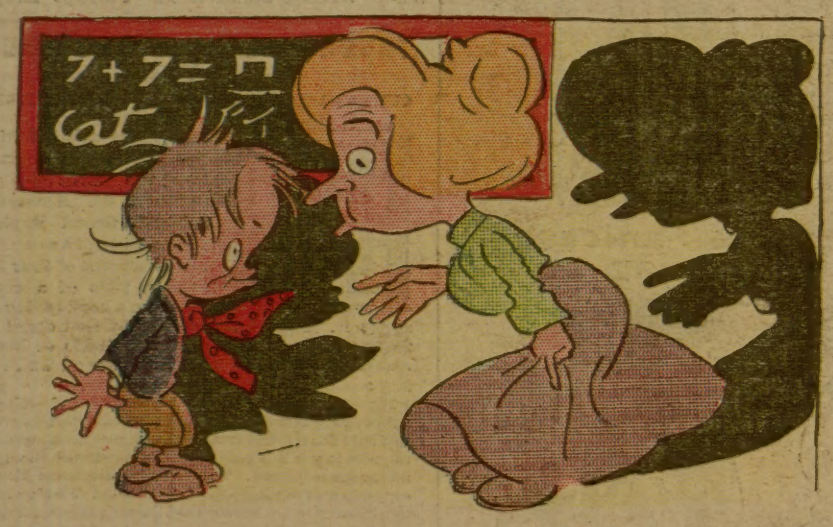
THE QUEER LITTLE FISH.

There was once a fish who refused to swim!
Now what do you think of that?
His folks all pleaded and argued with him,
But he set his fins down flat.
For swimming, he said, was much too slow,
And this is a rapid age, you know.
He would hunt up some swifter way to go.
And there that little fish sat!

He thought all day, and he thought all night,
Til his brain began to swim;
He thought till he lost his appetite,
And his friends all laughed at him.
They said he had always been so queer,
They weren't surprised at this strange idea;
But one morning, when they came to jeer,
They saw a wonderful sight!

He had harnessed a flying-fish to a shell,
In the hollow of which he sat;
His reins of seaweed, twisted well
(Now, what do you think of that!)
Old fishes gasped as he thundered by,
With his elbows out and his head held high,
And the lady fishes would blush and sigh
When he nodded and tipped his hat.

But the queerest part of this queer affair,
As I'm sure you'll agree with me,
Is the way folks changed their opinions there
In that fish world under the sea.
For they said he had always been so bright,
'Twas no wonder his scheme turned out all right;
And while they were cheering with all their might,
This little fish winked at me!



"Now, Tommy, why do we offer up thanks on Thanksgiving Day?"
"'Cos dere ain't no school dat day, I guess."

An Ill-Luck Diamond.

Superstitious persons now claim that the misfortunes which have befallen Mr. Kruger, the former president of the Transvaal, during the last few years were in a large measure due to a diamond, and here are the reasons why they are of this opinion: Chaka, a famous Zulu chief, was the first owner of ths diamond, and after his death by assassination it passed into the hands of the assassin, who was his own brother. Soon afterward this brother was in turn assassinated by another chief of the tribe, and in this way the precious stone changed hands again. It was destined, however, not to remain long in the hands of any Zulu, for the records show that within a few years it became the property of fifteen chiefs, each of whom held power for a short time and then was killed by some ambitious rival. The stone was next intrusted to a committee, composed of prominent Zulus, whose duty was to guard it against thieves. Meanwhile the Boers had heard of this wonderful diamond, and with the object of obtaining possession of it, several of them marched into the Zulu country. A fierce battle followed, in which 300 Zulus were killed, but the diamond was saved by a Zulu, who hid it in a gaping wound which had been made by a ball from a musket. The Boers, therefore, did not get it on that occasion, but soon afterward they did, for they captured the Zulu who had hidden it, and as President Kruger promptly set him at liberty, he presented him with the diamond as a token of his gratitude. No one knows whether "Oom Paul" still has the diamond or not. Whoever has it is the possessor of a beautiful and costly stone, for it weighs over 200 carats.

Pedestrian King.

Among the pedestrians no one is more indefatigable than the king of the Belgians. In Brussels he is to be met sauntering in the Bois, and in Paris he is a familiar figure on the boulevards; but it is chiefly in Ostend, where he has built a palatial villa, that he does hs walking. As early as 9 o'clock in the morning Leopold II. is abroad in a white waistcoat, straw hat, black coat and light striped trousers, and, quite unattended, he strolls on the sands or paces the esplanade, pausing now and again to watch the workmen who are hastily putting up new villas. However, some twenty yards behind, discreet, but alert, are two detectives. The king insists upon their keeping at a distance, and even when his daughter, Princess Clementine, accompanied by some friend, is walking on the beach, the servant and two detectives told off to watch her are ever well in the background. In fact, Leopold II. loves his liberty, and once, while in Paris, on seeing a large crowd assembled before the private entrance of the Hotel Bristol, he approached an idler on the outskirts of the crowd and asked what the people were waiting for. "To see Leopold," was the reply. "Well," said the king, "take my advice and go away; he's not worth waiting for." And with that Leopold II. betook himself to the boulevards.

Rocky Mountain Sheep.

In the wilder portions of the middle range of the Rocky Mountains there still exist a few of that strange species of animal known as the Rock Mountain sheep. As in the case of the buffalo, however, greedy man has all but exterminated these harmless and peculiar animals.

The Rocky Mountain sheep resembles the goat somewhat. Its head is quite large and carries very heavy horns which curve back close to the body; its feet are very small, while its limbs are extremely muscular and capable of taking the'r possessor to places which even man, with all his ingenuity, cannot attain. When frightened the sheep runs with the agility of the antelope to high and rocky portions of the mountains, and if closely pursued will jump from some dizzy height head first, striking on the curve of its horns. Before its pursuer can get down to where it threw itself the animal is up and away. Of all the strange methods employed by animals for self-preservation this is one of the queerest.

The Rocky Mountain sheep is sought solely for its head, which, when mounted, makes a unique ornament, valuable for the reason that it is rare and because the laws forbid the killing of the animal. Recently a hunter in Colorado was fined $600 for having in his possession two of the heads.

A herd of perhaps a hundred mountain sheep and ten wild buffalo were seen in Lost Park, Colo., a few months ago. Heretofore it was not known that there really are any buffalo except in practical captivity and those which the Government has placed in the Yellowstone National Park. The United States Government intends sending an expedition into Lost Park with a view of making an attempt at capturing as many of the sheep and buffalo as possible and removing them also to Yellowstone Park, where they will be safe from hunters. If something of this kind is not done, it will perhaps be but a few years until the Rocky Mountain sheep and "the oldest inhabitant" (buffalo) will become extinct.

Big Water Baby.

Hippopotamus is a Greek word, and means river horse. It is a good name for the great ugly monster that haunts the Nile and other rivers in Africa. It lives in water all day long, its nostrils and the top of its head alone being visible. When it goes under to escape the hunter it can remain below the surface for a quarter of an hour at a time. At sundown it leaves the stream to feed. Usually it crops the fields close by, spending most of the night in this pleasant occupation, but when the hour of dawn draws near again it returns to its home in the river. As a rule it is not an angry brute, but when chased its temper makes it terrible. It will crunch a boat to bits in its vast jaws, or upset it into the river by coming up beneath it.

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